

A BIBLICAL RESPONSE TO VIOLENCE:  
A HISTORICAL SURVEY OF THE ETHNO-RELIGIOUS CRISIS IN JOS, CENTRAL NIGERIA

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## ABBREVIATIONS

CAPRO	<i>Calvary Ministries</i>
CCM	<i>COCIN Community Mission</i>
COCIN	<i>Formally Church of Christ in Nigeria now called Church of Christ in Nations</i>
CPPI	<i>Church Planting Partners International</i>
ECWA	<i>Formally Evangelical Churches of West Africa, All now called Evangelical Churches Winning All</i>
EMS	<i>Evangelical Missionary Society</i>
FCS	<i>Fellowship of Christian Students</i>
GCMN	<i>Great Commission Movement of Nigeria</i>
ICS	<i>Institute of Church Society</i>
JIBWIS	<i>Jama'atu Izalatil Bid'ah Wa'iqamatis Sunnah</i>
LCCN	<i>Lutheran Church of Nigeria</i>
LLV	<i>Love Language Vision</i>
NBTT	<i>Nigerian Bible Translation Trust</i>
NEMA	<i>National Emergency Management Agency</i>
NLFA	<i>New Life For All</i>
SIM	<i>Sudan Interior Mission</i>
SUM	<i>Sudan United Mission</i>
TEKAN	<i>Fellowship of Churches of Christ in Nigeria</i>
	i. <i>Evangelical Resource Center</i>
	ii. <i>Fellowship of Nigerian Nurses and Midwives</i>

- iii. Joint Christian Movement of Nigeria (JCMWA)
- iv. Nigerian Corpers' Fellowship (NCF)
- v. Nigerian Evangelical Mission Association (NEMA)
- vi. Nigerian Fellowship of Evangelical Students (NIFES)

UFM *Urban Frontiers Mission*

UNESCO *The United Nations Organization for Education, Science and Culture*

## ABSTRACT

Violence is behavior involving physical force intended to hurt, damage, or kill. The crisis in Jos, Plateau State Nigeria has been described as “Ethno-Religious.” This study has revealed that the present crises are rooted in the interpretation of perceptions of history. A critical survey of how violence has been handled historically in the life of the church is covered. Whatever position the church takes in responding to violence has implications for the narrative of the gospel. This present study is an attempt to present the “Love Language Vision” as a biblical response to the challenge of violence in Jos, and elsewhere.

# CHAPTER ONE

## THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

### Introduction

This thesis aims to provide a critical survey of the issues on the topic of “A Biblical Response to Violence: A Historical Survey of the Ethno-Religious Conflict in Jos, Central Nigeria.” The conflict in Jos has been described as “ethno-religious.”<sup>1</sup> Yusufu Turaki has suggested that ethnicity and tribalism are currently the most pervasive and destructive forces in Africa.<sup>2</sup> Ethnic issues are involved in the conflict, which easily turns religious because of the religious identity and affiliation of the ethnic groups involved in it. Christianity and Islam are the religions involved here. The Hausa-Fulani<sup>3</sup> are mostly Muslims, while the indigenous tribes are mostly Christians. These conflicts in Jos are part of the bigger picture of the conflict in Northern Nigeria since 1980.<sup>4</sup> In addition, the perceptions of the indigenous non-Muslim communities in parts of Central Nigeria are

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<sup>1</sup> G.Y. Best, *Causes and Effects of Conflicts in the Southern Zone of Plateau State, Nigeria* (Jos, Nigeria: CECOMPS, 2008), 17; D.J. Gwamna and K.A. Amango, “Sliding Toward Armageddon: Revising Ethno-Religious Crisis in Nigeria,” *TCNN Research Bulletin* 52 (March 2010), 30-44.

<sup>2</sup> Yusufu Turaki, *Tribal Gods of Africa, Ethnicity, Tribalism and the Gospel of Christ* (Nairobi, Kenya: PJC-AEA, 1997), 3.

<sup>3</sup> This is the name of an African people of Northwestern Nigeria and Southwestern Nigeria. The Hausa are a racially diverse but culturally fairly homogeneous tribe numbering about 10 million to 15 million people. Historically organized into a group of feudal city-states, the Hausa were conquered from the 14th century on by a succession of West African kingdoms—among them, Mali, Songhai, Bornu, and Fulani. In this context they are called Hausa-Fulani because of the perceived synergy in carrying this cause as viewed by the other indigenous tribes.

<sup>4</sup> See Jan H. Boer, *Nigeria's Decades of Blood, 1980-2002* (Belleville, Ontario: Essence Publishing, 2003) for a fuller discussion.

that the conflict is a continuation of the Uthman Dan-Fodio's jihad launched in 1804.<sup>5</sup>

Current developmental stages of the crisis in Nigeria have made it even more worrisome due to the use of bombs and other highly coordinated terrorist skills.<sup>6</sup>

As the church in Jos counts its loss after every round of the crises in human lives, properties and many other things,<sup>7</sup> I have observed that, together with the loss of human lives and property, more importantly the image of the gospel is tarnished by some of the responses from within the Church. This latter loss mentioned is significant. The need to arrest this ugly scenario cannot be overemphasized. Hence, the need exists for this study. This study is both an academic exercise and a practical study that hopes to bring a wakeup call to the church in Jos. However, the findings and conclusions drawn from this present study will be profound in the sense that they can be useful and applicable in other places that face similar challenges because the gospel is a powerful message that can transform and give meaning to situations such as these.

This study hopes to bring to bear the centrality of the message of the gospel as lived by our Lord Jesus Christ and through the early church. How did Jesus react to violence? What can the church learn from how Jesus reacted to violence? What are the lessons from the early church? The answers to these questions will form the basis for

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<sup>5</sup> S.D. Dachomo, "Muslim and Christian Perceptions of Inter-Religious Encounters in Nigeria: A Historiographical Study of the Uthman Danfodio's Jihad 1804-1904" (master's dissertation, University of Edinburgh, 2004).

<sup>6</sup> The bombing of the United Nations House in Abuja the capital city of Nigeria is hereby referred to, on August 26, 2011.

<sup>7</sup> For instance, it is believed that over 600 people mostly Muslims were killed by Christians in retaliation over an initial attack by the Muslims on a church in which over 53 people were killed including the pastor of the church. See Best, *Causes and Effects*, 44.



the study. This project will be an attempt to put the problem in perspective. What are the issues involved? I recognize this work is not the first attempt to bring out ways to resolve the conflict in Jos.<sup>8</sup> Rather, this present study attempts to survey the change in attitude that Christians and other non-Muslims within the area have had in response to these rounds of violence that are perceived to be unleashed on them in the name of “Allah.” The study also attempts to conduct research through the use of oral interviews and local newspapers.

It cannot be disputed that the message of the gospel as recorded in the Bible is the truth that sets people free from the bondage of sin and the devil. Maintaining its uniqueness and relevance by allowing it to shape our actions as we respond to issues around us cannot be overemphasized. Christopher Sugden commenting on identity, status and worth in the Gospel states, “The concept of dignity is a biblical theme. People are called to find their true human worth and dignity in the context of the call of God to give their allegiance to him.”<sup>9</sup> Dignity and identity in Christ is exhibited by our actions and by how we relate to the challenges posed by our circumstances in this life. The Bible is the foundation of the Christian faith; Christians find the revealed will of the triune God imbedded in it. The Bible guides the faithful in matters of belief and practice.

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<sup>8</sup> Most works on this subject have centered on the political, economic and relational aspects of the conflicts in Northern Nigeria. For example, J. Azumah, *The Legacy of Arab-Islam in Africa: Quest for Inter-Religious Dialogue* (Oxford, UK: Oneworld Publications), 2001; S.G. Best, ed, *Causes of Conflicts in the Southern Zone of Plateau State, Nigeria* (Jos, Nigeria: John Archers Publishers, 2008); T. Falola, *Violence in Nigeria: The Crisis of Religious Politics and Secular Ideologies* (New York, NY: University of Rochester, 1998).

<sup>9</sup> Christopher Sugden, “What is Good about Good News to the Poor?” *A.D. 2000 and Beyond: A Mission Agenda*, ed. Viney Samuel and Chris Sugden (Oxford, UK: Regnum Books, 1991), 59.

The message of the gospel must shape our actions and our reactions to the issues around us. This study concludes with a theological reflection based on biblical principles.

### Definitions

The major aspects of this writing are the issues of violence, crisis, conflict, ethnicity and religion as it concerns Jos, Plateau State, Central Nigeria. The following key words are defined for the context that they are applied in this present study.

- i. VIOLENCE: This is behavior involving physical force intended to hurt, damage, or kill. It could be a strength of emotion or an unpleasant or destructive force.<sup>10</sup> It could be a natural force, passion and intensity.<sup>11</sup> Violence may be the exertion of physical force so as to injure or abuse, as in warfare affecting illegal entry into a house. It may also be injury by or as if by distortion, infringement, or profanation.<sup>12</sup>
- ii. CRISIS (Plural- CRISES): This is a time of intense difficulty or danger. The word has the following synonyms: dilemma, disaster, plight, predicament and quandary. Its origin is from the Greek *krisis* which means “decision” from *krinein* “decide.”<sup>13</sup> Crisis, in general, and in Jos, Nigeria in particular, provides

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<sup>10</sup> *The Reader's Digest Word Power Dictionary*, s.v. “violence” (London, UK: Oxford University, 2001), 1095.

<sup>11</sup> *Queen's English Dictionary and Thesaurus of the English Language*, s.v. “violence” (London, UK: Parragon, 2002), 362.

<sup>12</sup> *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary and Thesaurus in Encyclopedia Britannica*, CD-ROM, Student Home Edition, s.v. “violence” (Chicago, IL: Encyclopedia Britannica, 2013).

<sup>13</sup> *Reader's Digest Word Power Dictionary*, s.v. “crisis,” 222.

opportunities for decision. This present study hopes to point out that the church in Jos can use this opportunity to make an impact with the message of the gospel. The church in Jos should not be in a dilemma; rather, it should make decisions that would bring the message of the gospel to Muslims around her.

- iii. CONFLICT: This is a serious disagreement or argument. It may be a prolonged armed struggle and an incompatibility between opinions or principles.<sup>14</sup> It is from the Latin word *conflictus*, which is an act of striking together or from the French *confligere* meaning “to strike together.”<sup>15</sup> Marcus Borg gives a view of the word *conflict* as having a broad and a narrow sense, “the narrow definition refers only to open clash or struggle, either violent or non-violent, while the broad sense includes the manifestation of struggles, but also tensions, hostile attitudes, and antagonistic interest between groups, even if those phenomena have not resulted in open struggle.”<sup>16</sup> The issues in the Jos conflict as would be highlighted in this present study are centered on the historical formation and ownership of Jos, and how they are closely linked to the ethnic identity/ religious affiliation of the parties involved in the crisis. This latter understanding of the word by Borg speaks of the situation in Jos as

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<sup>14</sup> *Reader's Digest Word Power Dictionary*, s.v. “conflict,” 195.

<sup>15</sup> *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary and Thesaurus in Encyclopedia Britannica*, s.v. “conflict.”

<sup>16</sup> Michael Lawson, *Facing Conflict* (London, UK: Hodder and Stoughton, 1952), 13; Aaron Garba Ndirmbita, “Inter-Religious Conflicts and their Implications for Christian Mission: A Case Study of Jos, Plateau State” (masters thesis, TCNN, April 2005), 10.

the conflict followed some stages from the narrow to the broad stage, from the non-violent to the violent.

Three categories of religious-related conflicts in Nigeria since the 1970s are identified as follows:

- (a) Intra-religious disturbance: this category is referred to as conflicts which are within the same group of people. In Islam, it could be disagreements between the different Islamic sects; the Maitatsine Riots of the early 1980s is one example.<sup>17</sup> In Christianity, this could take the form of disagreements between members of the same denomination; for example, the conflict that engulfed the Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria (LCCN) in 1997.
- (b) Inter-religious conflicts: this category arises from differences over religious matters. Disputes over issues such as the imposition, or as others may prefer, the re-introduction of the sharia in some northern states of Nigeria. Muslims see it as reawakening of “true” Islam in the areas that had been conquered by the jihadist in the past, while other non-Muslim communities see it as wanting to continue the subjugation of their people. States like Kaduna, Kano, Bauchi and Bornu have had bitter experiences of this category of conflict.
- (c) Ethno-religious: this category is one that starts as socio-ethnic conflict, but as soon as it starts, it turns religious because of the ethnic identities

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<sup>17</sup> The Maitatsine riots of the 1980s are an Islamic Fundamentalist group that came about to ensure the creation of an Islamic State in Nigeria with similar operational Operandi like the present Boko Haram.

of the people involved in it. Strong ethnic identities are formed to serve as the basis for fighting a cause and these ethnic identities would find a place within a faith tradition that is prevalent among the ethnic group. Examples include the Tafawa Balewa conflicts between the Sayawas and the Hausa/Fulani,<sup>18</sup> the Zangon Kataf riots between the Kataf people and the Hausa/Fulani, and the Jos crisis between the Berom, Anaguta, Afezere and other indigenous people of the Jos, Plateau and the Hausa/Fulani.<sup>19</sup> Generally, conflicts in Northern Nigeria have always carried a number of faces, ranging from ethnic, socio-political, economic and religious faces.

- iv. ETHNICITY: From *ethnic*, which means “Relating to a group of people having a common national or cultural tradition.” It could also refer to an origin by birth rather than by present nationality.<sup>20</sup> Yusufu Turaki describes ethnicity and tribalism as the current most pervasive powerful destructive forces in Africa.<sup>21</sup> He then gave a catalogue of conflicts in Africa that reflected the political state of affairs of each of the African countries mentioned, noting that what really lied beneath the surface were ethnic, racial, tribal and

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<sup>18</sup> Christopher Luka, “The Effects of Religious Conflicts on COCIN RCC Tafawa Balewa” (bachelor’s thesis, Gindiri Theological Seminary/University of Jos, May 2010).

<sup>19</sup> Vincent N. Fazing, “Religious Conflicts: The Nigerian Experience,” *Jos Studies* in Aaron Ndirmbita, “Inter-Religious Conflicts and their Implications for Christian Mission: A Case Study of Jos, Plateau State” (masters thesis, TCNN, April 2005), 4-5.

<sup>20</sup> *Reader’s Digest Word Power Dictionary*, s.v. “ethnicity.”

<sup>21</sup> Turaki, *Tribal Gods of Africa*, 3.

cultural tensions and conflicts, all of which abounded after political independence from the colonial forces.

“Sudan (Race and Religion); Ethiopia (Ethnic); the Congo crisis (Ethnic); South Africa (Race and Politics); Nigeria (Ethnic); Angola (Ethnic); Mozambique (Ethnic); Zimbabwe (Race and Politics); Namibia (Race and Politics); Morocco (Ethnic); Senegal (Ethnic); Uganda (Ethnic); Liberia (Ethnic); and Sierra Leone (Ethnic).<sup>22</sup>

- v. RELIGION: This is the belief in, and worship of, a superhuman controlling power, especially a personal God or gods. It is a description of a particular system of faith and worship; a pursuit of interest followed with devotion.<sup>23</sup>
- The origin of the word is from the Latin *religio* meaning “obligation, reverence;” originally, in the sense of life under monastic vows.<sup>24</sup> Some major world religions are Baha’i, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Shinto, Sikhism, and Zoroastrianism. However, before the advent of these mostly near eastern religions, Africans practiced African traditional religions for many centuries. The religious identities of the major parties in the Jos crisis are Christianity and Islam. Turaki poses a question that is necessary to consider as we discuss the subject of ethno-religious conflict in Africa, stating, “The whole world and even Africans themselves are asking, ‘How could ethnic/racial/tribal groups with a very large Christian or Muslim population on both sides of the conflicts embarked on such brutal and

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<sup>22</sup> Turaki, *Tribal Gods of Africa*, 3.

<sup>23</sup> *Reader’s Digest Word Power Dictionary*, s.v. “religion.”

<sup>24</sup> *Reader’s Digest Word Power Dictionary*, s.v. “religion.”

destructive massacre and annihilation of each other?”<sup>25</sup> He then states that this question reflects an assumption that sees Christianity, Islam, or modernity as a unifying factor, and thereby could serve as a deterrent to such unleashed human wickedness and wanton brutality and destruction of human life. The best example of this assumption is the Hutus and the Tutsis. Both ethnic groups are said to have a very large population in Rwanda and Burundi. The other is the Somali Muslims.<sup>26</sup> The strong sense of religious identity portrayed in the crisis in Jos is said to be the driving force of the perpetrator’s agenda. The Muslims, mostly Hausa/Fulani, see it as jihad, while the mostly indigenous Christian communities see it as a divine injunction to protect the land that God gave their forefathers. It is all done in the name of “God.”<sup>27</sup>

### **Setting The Context – A Brief History Of Jos, Central Nigeria**

A discussion of the history, ownership, and establishment of Jos will help create an understanding to the issues that are associated with the conflicts in the area. No historical examination, however, is value free. Any historical writer approaches his subject with a number of presuppositions as to methods and goals. It is no different here. Todd makes this assertion when he quotes Bebbington,

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<sup>25</sup> Turaki, *Tribal Gods of Africa*, 3.

<sup>26</sup> Turaki, *Tribal Gods of Africa*, 3.

<sup>27</sup> *The Berom News Magazine* 1 no 1 (March 2003), 21.

Prior to presenting his argument for a Christian approach to history, Bebbington surveys a number of historical theories including cyclical history, the idea of progress, historicism, and Marxist approaches. It is, however, at the interaction between positivist and idealist approaches that he argues one finds a Christian approach to history. He states that positivism holds there are:... regularities that can be established in human behavior.

The technique of the historian is consequently a matter of empirical investigation to establish general laws. There is no method peculiar to history....A belief that history uses essentially the same methods as other social sciences is the common bond of the positivist school. By contrast, idealists believe:...that historical method is unique. Whereas a scientist aims to formulate general laws, the historian concentrates on illuminating particular individuals and events. Many advocates of an idealist position would go so far as to claim that human beings cannot be studied by the methods of science at all. Human beings are charged with intention, which cannot be explained in terms of scientific categories...they stress that men have ideas. That is what makes human beings distinctive; and that in turn makes the history of human affairs distinctive. A belief in the autonomy of history is the hallmark of the idealist school.

Analysis of either of these views commences with their estimate of humanity. Positivism reduces man to being merely a part of nature, a “thing” like everything else. Idealism separates him from nature elevating him above everything else. Bebbington argues that only the Christian view of human nature can adequately reconcile these positions. God created man who is thus a relatively insignificant part of nature. Yet man is created in the image of God and thus is singled out for greatness. To the Christian, therefore, the positivist and idealist approaches are complementary, not polar opposites.<sup>28</sup>

It is in this light that I am presenting an all-inclusive historical overview of Jos Plateau, Central Nigeria. An examination of the historical variants about the ownership of Jos is necessary for an accurate understanding of the tensions that easily results in what easily looks like the road to Kigali (Rwanda) which is a sad reality that stares us in

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<sup>28</sup> D. Bebbington, *Patterns in History: A Christian Perspective on Historical Thought* (Leicester, UK: Apollos 1990) in W.P. Todd, “The Attitudes of the Evangelical Church of West Africa (ECWA) Towards Islam in Light of Ethnic and Religious Violence” (doctoral thesis, Queen’s University of Belfast, 2010), 6.



the face.<sup>29</sup> This all-inclusive narration of historical issues has been suggested to be the way out of misrepresenting facts about an issue.<sup>30</sup>

Jos is situated in the middle belt of Nigeria and it is the capital of Plateau State. Jos is about 1250 meters (about 4100 feet) above sea level on the Delimi River. With average monthly temperatures ranging between 21° and 25° C (69° and 77° F), Jos is considerably cooler than other cities in Nigeria, and it serves as a cool highland resort in a setting of scenic beauty. Jos is the center of tin and columbite mining and smelting in Nigeria. Other industries include steel rolling, burlap spinning and weaving, food and beer production, chemical manufacture, furniture manufacture, and printing. Jos is located at the terminus of a spur (first built in 1915) of the railway from Port Harcourt to Maiduguri and at a highway junction linking the city to Bauchi and Zaria. An airport also serves the city. The University of Jos was founded in 1975. The UNESCO School for Museum Technicians is also in Jos. The city is the seat of a Roman Catholic and Anglican Archbishop. It is also the headquarters of many Christian denominations with large memberships.<sup>31</sup> Points of interest include an open-air museum of traditional architecture and the Jos Museum, which displays artifacts of the Nok culture.

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<sup>29</sup> Sunday Dare, "Jos City of Peace to Killing Fields", *The News*, February 1, 2010, 46.

<sup>30</sup> Dachomo, "Muslim and Christian Perceptions."

<sup>31</sup> Jos, Central Nigeria is headquarters to Church of Christ in Nigeria (COCIN), Evangelical Churches Winning All (ECWA), Fellowship of Churches of Christ in Nigeria (TEKAN), New Life For All (NLFA), Calvary Missions (CAPRO) and many other. With three big seminaries, of a Roman Catholic Seminary and two other Evangelical Seminaries: Theological College of Northern Nigeria (TCNN) and the Jos ECWA Theological Seminary (JETS), the Saint Augustine's Major Seminary is also located in the Jos (Roman Catholic Seminary).

In the early 1900s, Jos was built by the British at the site of the preexisting village of Geash. Tin mining began in the area in about 1907, and it developed rapidly following the completion of a railroad to Jos in 1914. Jos also grew as a resort town, attracting tourists to its cool climate. The city has attracted migrants from Nigeria's many ethnic groups. Plotnicov describes Jos as "one of the healthiest places in West Africa."<sup>32</sup> Historians and commentators on the conflicts in Jos have opined that the history of Jos has recently attracted immense attention. This is due to the various interests and perspectives that have come to bear in recovering the history of this tin city.<sup>33</sup> The differences among the historical records of Jos have become one of the causes for the crises.<sup>34</sup> More precisely, claims for the formation and ownership of Jos are the contending issues. The Berom, one of the indigenous tribes claiming ownership of Jos, maintain that they had fully settled in the present town of Jos with a robust administration alongside the Anaguta, before the advent of the British Colonial Administration.<sup>35</sup>

Nanwul Gutip, in her opening statements about Jos Plateau, quotes Karl Kumm<sup>36</sup> as saying,

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<sup>32</sup> Leonard Plotnicov, *Strangers in the City: Urban Man in Jos, Nigeria* (Pittsburg, PA: University of Pittsburg, 1967), 33.

<sup>33</sup> Gwamna and Amango, *Sliding Towards Armageddon*, 31.

<sup>34</sup> Gwamna and Amango, *Sliding Towards Armageddon*, 31.

<sup>35</sup> Ayuba Mavalla, *Conflict Transformation: Churches in the Face of Structural Violence in Northern Nigeria* (Oxford, UK: Regnum Books, 2014), 156.

<sup>36</sup> Founder of the Sudan United Mission, a mission body from the United Kingdom that came to Nigeria in 1904, and who established churches across the Sahel in countries like Nigeria, Cameroon and the Sudan.

On Wednesday my little caravan reached Bukuru (part of Jos)....The whole of the Plateau land is healthy. The people are independent and brave. Large deposits of tin constitute the mainspring for development...high cactus hedges encircle their habitations and the approach to the village leads through narrow lanes and arches formed by poisonous cactus plants. The mounted troops of the Muslim Sultans in the north have not been able to make anything of the tribe.<sup>37</sup>

This underscores the fact that most of the inhabitants of the area were not Muslims when the Christian missionaries arrived. The truth that this assertion reveals speaks volumes to the issue in contention: the formation and ownership of Jos.

The understanding mentioned above forms the first variant history on the formation and ownership of Jos. The tribes that are indigenous to the area have a strong claim for the formation and the ownership of the city. These are the Berom, Naraguta and the Afizere. Even among these indigenous tribes there is a contention on the boundaries of land owned by each tribe.<sup>38</sup>

Danfulani and Fwatshak captured this when they noted, "Today, however, the ownership of Jos town is hotly contested among the three main indigenous ethnic groups (Berom, Naraguta and Afezere) whose traditional land meets on an unmarked borderline in Jos town."<sup>39</sup> The contention among these tribes basically involves the borders and not any other legitimacy to the claims. This is seen in the claims of the groups of mutual communal living that have express themselves in inter-ethnic

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<sup>37</sup> Nanwul Gutip, *Church of Christ in Nigeria (COCIN): Birth and Growth* (Jos, Nigeria: Crossroads Communication, 1998), 8.

<sup>38</sup> Sen Luka Gwom, *The Berom and Religion: Practices and Prospects* (Jos, Nigeria: Fab Educational Books, 1992), 5.

<sup>39</sup> Umar Habila Dadem Danfulani and Sati Umaru Fwatshak, "Briefing the September 2001 Events in Jos Nigeria", *African Affairs* (Royal African Society, 2002), 245, in Gwamna and Amnago, *Sliding Towards Armageddon*, 31.

marriages and other aspects of life. This history insists that the indigenous ethnic groups that live on the Jos Plateau were not subdued by anyone before the colonization of the area by the British in the late eighteenth century. Isichei concurs with this understanding when she states that the various ethnic groups that make up the population of the area migrated in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to find farmlands, and later to escape the religious persecution of the jihadists.<sup>40</sup> However, by this time, most of the people of the area were farmers by occupation and adherents of the African Traditional Religion. But, with the advent of missionary activities in the area by the early twentieth century, most of the inhabitants had converted to Christianity.

Shadrach Gaya Best gives another history of the religious and social credentials of Jos as the firm belief among the Hausa-Fulani that “they founded Jos and nurtured the city to a modern city without help from any of the indigenous ethnic groups in Jos”.<sup>41</sup> This version means that the Hausa-Fulani identity came with the Islamic identity, and the Hausa-Fulani waste no time to assert this Islamic label. The considerable Islamic presence and activity goes toward emphasizing this assertion. The Izala movement (JIBWIS), a radical Islamic evangelical organization, lays claims to having been founded in Jos. This movement has a large following in Nigeria.<sup>42</sup>

But Best notes further that, “Traders, butchers, Koranic teachers and other artisans also followed the mining population. Other wider Plateau indigenous ethnic

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<sup>40</sup> E. Isichei, *Studies in The History of Plateau State, Nigeria* (London, UK: Macmillan Press, 1982), 136.

<sup>41</sup> Best, *Conflict and Peace*, 24. This variant is from a Speech Delivered by Alhaji Inuwa Ali (Turakin Jos) on the occasion of the Presidential Retreat on Peace and Conflict Resolution, National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies, Kuru, Jos, 13-26 January 2002.

<sup>42</sup> Best, *Conflict and Peace*, 24.

groups come into the city for either commerce or to join the tin mining industry. These include Plateau groups like the Ngas, Ron, Mpun and Mwaghavul".<sup>43</sup> However, the commercial importance of Jos also attracted people from the southern part of Nigeria including the Ibo, Yoruba, Urhobo, Ibibio, and Edo among others. This situation has created lasting implications for inter-ethnic relations between the "natives" and the alien population for years.<sup>44</sup> This cross-cultural and multi-ethnic combination of Jos involved all of these tribes from the wider Plateau and other parts of the country, not just with the Hausa-Fulani. It is surprising to discover that, of all the ethnic groups, it is the multi-ethnic group of the city that is claiming the formation and ownership of the city. Some excerpts from the archives of the former colonial government go on to reiterate this fact, saying,

The non indigenous natives who arrived in the Naraguta (Now Jos Division) consequently upon the European mining activities have been administered since 1912 by a special introduced native administration, as the primitive pagan administrations could not deal with civilized and acute incomers. The local pagans are independent of this special administration...he non-indigenous natives mentioned above are mostly Mohammedans and Hausawa.<sup>45</sup>

This document reiterates the fact that those non-indigenous communities that came to Jos include the Hausas.

At the wake of the violent clash in Yelwa in 2004 that gave rise to the imposition of the state of emergency in Plateau state by President Olusegun Obasanjo, a peace conference was organized and the outcome was published and christened, "Plateau Resolves: Report of the Plateau Peace Conference 2004

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<sup>43</sup> Best, *Conflict and Peace*, 25.

<sup>44</sup> Gwamna and Amago, *Sliding Towards Armageddon*, 32.

<sup>45</sup> Plateau Indigenous Development Association Network (PIDAN), *The History, Ownership, Establishment of Jos and Misconceptions about the Recurrent Jos Conflict 1*, vol 1, (Jos, Nigeria: DAN-SiL Press, 2010), back cover. Reports on Bauchi Province 1918 Josprof NAK 208/1918 Vol. 1, 30-31.

(18<sup>th</sup> August-21<sup>st</sup> September, 2004).” The section of the document that addresses the claim of ownership of Jos reads, Delegates made reference to many documents at their disposal to confirmed the fact that the pre-colonial history of Jos is synonymous with only three indigenous ethnic groups which share boundaries with each other namely Afizere, Anaguta and Berom. It was confirmed that these ethnic groups like all other indigenous ethnic groups in the State have lived in peace with other people that had settled among them. The Conference’s attention was drawn to minutes of an interactive session among the various communities of Jos North Local Government Area held at the Government House, Jos on June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2004 in which the Hausa made it clear that they lay no claims to the ownership of Jos and the stool of the Gbong Gwom Jos.<sup>46</sup>

Regarding this account on the ownership of Jos, documents surveyed show that the Afizere, Anaguta and the Berom are indigenous to the place.

### **The Coming Of Islam To Jos**

Dean S. Gilliland’s *African Religion Meets Islam* gives one of the early encounters of the traditional African tribe with Islam, specifically, of the Berom people of the Jos, plateau. In a chart with one of the elders of the Gyel community, Da Ndung Gyel, he related the following:

A few Hausa men came to the chief and asked him for a place to live...The chief led them to a certain place where, he said, they could build their houses. But first the sarkin tsafi (traditional priest) performed a ritual of purification in the ground and it was declared that from time forward no Berom should live on this “foreign ground” or ever plant a farm on it.<sup>47</sup>

This underscores the fact that, initially, the coming of the Hausa-Muslims to Jos was for trade and other economic gains through the Fulani nomads who came looking for

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<sup>46</sup> Plateau Resolves: Report of the Plateau Peace Conference 2004 18<sup>th</sup> August- 21<sup>st</sup> September, 2004 (Main Report, September 2004), Government Printers, Jos, 000387/2511/5000, 23.

<sup>47</sup> Dean S. Gilliland, *African Religion Meets Islam* (New York, NY: University Press, 1986), 62-63.

greener pastures for their cattle. The Yoruba traders from southwestern Nigeria make the other block of people who came to Jos with Islam.<sup>48</sup> This presence of Islam on the Jos Plateau was further enhanced by the establishment of the mining industry in Jos by the Europeans in the early twentieth century. An excerpt from the archives on the report on the Bauchi Province 1918 concurs:

The non indigenous natives who arrived in the Naraguta (now Jos Division) consequently upon the European mining activities have been administered since 1912 by a special introduced native administration, as the primitive pagan administrations could not deal with the civilized and acute incomers. The local pagans are independent of this special administration...The non-indigenous natives mentioned above are mostly the Mohammedans and Hausawa.<sup>49</sup>

Another factor that led to the influx of Muslims into Jos was the establishment of the British protectorate of Northern Nigeria.<sup>50</sup>

This history of the coming of Islam to Jos suggests that Muslim's presence was around the area before the coming colonization that came to be known as Jos, but that it had no impact on the socio-cultural or religious life of the indigenous people. However, with colonization and tin mining activities of the foreign forces, more hands were needed to operate in the mines and more Hausa/Fulani (Muslims) were brought into the area by the colonial masters.

These early Muslims in Jos concentrated on their businesses with little or no effort to produce converts to Islam. Instead, they called the natives derogatory names such as "Arna" and "Shou- shou." This, among other reasons, accounts for the low

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<sup>48</sup> Cyril O. Imo, *Muslim-Christian Relations in Jos, Plateau State Nigeria*, (Jos, Nigeria: Ehindero Press, 2003), 101.

<sup>49</sup> PIDAN, *History, Ownership, Establishment*, inside back cover page.

<sup>50</sup> Cyril Imo, "Muslim-Christian Relations," 101.

patronage of Islam in the area. Therefore, though Islam predates the coming of Christians and Christian missionaries, Islam was able to make nothing of the indigenous people of Jos.<sup>51</sup> The Northern Regional government in Nigeria conducted a census in 1952, whose results showed the religious divide in the population as 84.5% Christians, 12% Muslims and 3.5% Traditionalists.<sup>52</sup>

Aaron Ndirmbita attributes the events leading to the consolidation of Muslim presence in Jos as the outbreak of the civil war in 1967 and the decline of the economic value of tin on the world market. This happened because the easterners who controlled most of the commercial activities had to leave Jos. The Hausa-Fulani Muslims then took up the trade and the commercial activities that was formerly controlled by Christian easterners. These businesses, lands, and houses were either sold or abandoned by the easterners.<sup>53</sup> The early Muslim sects in Jos were the *Tijjaniyya* and the *kadiriyya* of the Hausa-Fulani and other Northern Nigerian Muslims, while the two major Yoruba sects are *Nu-ud-Deen* and the *Ansar-ud-Deen*. It is reported that it was not until the 1980s that the militant *Izala* sect, now headed by the Asheik Yahaya Jingir, surfaced in Jos.<sup>54</sup> The activities of this later sect are said to be mainly responsible for the recent carnage in Jos. The conflict of Monday, September 5, was a result of the insistence of the sect to go to an area regarded as not fitting for the *Id-ilfitir* prayers because the security situation of Jos was the reason for the recent conflict. Against every sense of reason and the

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<sup>51</sup> Gutip, COCIN, 8.

<sup>52</sup> Plotnicov, *Strangers to the City*, 75.

<sup>53</sup> Ndirmbita, "Inter-Religious Conflicts," 31.

<sup>54</sup> Ndirmbita, "Inter-Religious Conflicts," 31.



advice of the security chiefs working in Jos, the Asheik Yahaya Jingir led a violent, misdirected group of zealots to the Kabong area for the function that ended in the violent clash of 2011.<sup>55</sup>

### **The Coming Of Christianity To Jos**

The coming of the European colonialist to Jos opened the area to Christianity. The pioneer work of Dr. Karl Kumm of the Sudan United Mission is significant to understanding this history. The Sudan United Mission, out of which the Church of Christ in Nigeria (COCIN) grew, was formed in June 1904 in Edinburgh, Scotland, at the meeting held in the Saint George's cathedral church. Before its formation, Dr. Karl Kumm, the founder of the mission, attended a meeting of the North African Mission in October 1895. That meeting seemed to have influenced his life. The publications of Dr. H. Grattan Guinness on "The Sudan and the Regions Beyond" might also have influenced Dr. Kumm. He became interested in Africa and wanted to live and work for Africans. During his time of preparation for the task, he learned Arabic in Egypt and was eventually betrothed to Lucy Guinness who had a desire to work for the Lord. They were married in February, 1900, in an American Mission Church in Cairo, and then they began to devote themselves to the great task to which God was calling them. In the early months of 1904, Kumm went to Tripoli to learn the Hausa language in preparation for his work in the Sudan. While at Tripoli, he became acquainted with C.L. Temple, the British Resident for the Plateau and Bauchi, who suggested taking up work on the

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<sup>55</sup>Police Commissioner of Plateau State, interview by PRTV/NTA Jos, September 3<sup>rd</sup> 2011.

Plateau, which had a large population of different ethnic groups who were mainly idol worshippers. At the same time, conditions in the Sudan revealed that hundreds of the ethnic groups that formed an Islam frontier had not heard of Christ.<sup>56</sup>

An investigation expedition to the area was undertaken, but not until adequate preparations were made, and candidates for the historic events were equipped and warned of the difficulties they might face. The sailing commenced on 23 July 1904. The pioneer missionaries of the Sudan United Mission consisted of Dr. Karl Kumm, Dr. Andrew Bateman, Mr. Burt and Mr. Lowry Maxwell. The team arrived at Lokoja in August, 1904, and Kumm went to Zungeru to discuss matters with Sir F. Lugard, the governor of the northern region of the colonial authority. Lugard recommended them to start work at Wase, the headquarters of a small Muslim emirate just outside the mountainous area. The work was not successful that time as the Emir objected to the presence of Christian missionaries.<sup>57</sup> With this initial resistance to the gospel, the team accepted Temple's advice to start work among the pagans of the area rather than amongst the Muslim communities. The mission house was destroyed in 1907, and the team abandoned Wase in 1909. A move northward to the tribal groups of the area produced much fruit. Due to friendly welcome given to the missionaries by the Jukun people, they decided to open mission stations at Wukari in 1906, Donga in 1907, and later in Dampar. In February 1907, a Mission station was opened among the Tarok at Lantang. A little later, two stations were opened among the Berom at Bukuru and

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<sup>56</sup> Gutip, COCIN, 21-22.

<sup>57</sup> E.P.T. Crampton, *Christianity in Northern Nigeria* (Kaduna, Nigeria: Baraka Press, 1975), 41.

Gyel.<sup>58</sup> Bukuru and Gyel are the first touch of Christianity on the Jos Plateau. The Roman Catholic mission came to Jos in 1911,<sup>59</sup> and later the Sudan Interior Mission (SIM). Christianity experienced consistent growth during the years that followed. It has been noted earlier in this study that by 1952, a census conducted by the government revealed that 84 percent of the population in Jos was Christian. With this growth, Jos became the center of missions and missionary activities in the country and beyond.<sup>60</sup> The list of mission related organizations or agencies that have their headquarters in Jos attest to this fact:

- Church of Christ In Nigeria (COCIN)
- Evangelical Churches Wining All (ECWA)
- COCIN Community Mission (CCM) of COCIN
- Evangelical Missionary Society (EMS) of ECWA
- Calvary Ministries (CAPRO)
- Great Commission Movement of Nigeria (GCM)
- Church Planting Partners International (CPPI)
- Action Partners (former SUM)
- Sudan Interior Mission (SIM)
- Urban Frontiers Mission
- Mission Supporters' League

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<sup>58</sup> Gutip, COCIN, 26.

<sup>59</sup> A.O. Makozi and G.J. Afolabi, *The History of Roman Catholics in Nigeria* (Lagos, Nigeria: Macmillan, 1952) 59.

<sup>60</sup> Ndirmbita, "Inter-religious Conflicts," 34.

- Life Challenge Africa
- Mission to Arabs
- New Life For All
- Stefanos Foundation
- Institute of Church Society (ICS)
- Calvary International
- Nigerian Bible Translation Trust
- Fellowship of Christian Students (FCS)
- International Institute of Christian Studies (University of Jos)
- Joint Christian Movement of Nigeria (JCMWA)
- Nigerian Fellowship of Evangelical Students (NIFES)
- Fellowship of Nigerian Nurses and Midwives
- Evangelical Resource Center
- Nigerian Evangelical Mission Association (NEMA)
- Nigerian Corpers' Fellowship (NCF)
- World Impact Seed Partners International
- Fellowship of Churches of Christ in Nigeria (TEKAN).

Jos also prides itself as one of the only cities in Nigeria that is housing five major seminaries among many other smaller ones. These major seminaries include the Saint Augustine's Major Seminary with a monastery of the Roman Catholic mission, the Theological College of Northern Nigeria (TCNN) owned by TEKAN, Jos ECWA Theological Seminary (JETS) of ECWA, the Evangel Seminary owned by the Assemblies of God

Church Nigeria, and the Christian Institute of the Anglican Archdiocese of Jos.<sup>61</sup> The

large number of church buildings and high attendance numbers at church programs

further solidify this position of the presence of Christianity in Jos on a daily basis.

Ndirmbita quotes Danjuma Byang as reacting to a Muslim writer, Galadima Abdullahi, who expressed his fondness for the beauty of Jos while at the same time failing to hide his bitter hatred for the presence of Christianity in Jos when he poured out a venomous attack on Christianity as he writes, “one thing... pollutes the beautiful scenery, it sticks out like a sore thumb and you can smell it all over the place – intolerable Christianity.”<sup>62</sup>

I concur with Ndirmbita that Galadima Abdullahi might have spoken the mind of many Hausa/Fulani Muslims in Jos and elsewhere. Most recently, as in the past, Jos has served as a haven for many displaced Christians from other parts of northern Nigeria. The “Boko Haram”<sup>63</sup> crisis in parts of Northeastern Nigeria has displaced many Christians who feel Jos is still a place to run to, not minding its fragile safety.

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<sup>61</sup> Ndirmbita, “Inter-religious Conflicts,” 34-35.

<sup>62</sup> Ndirmbita, “Inter-religious Conflicts,” 34-35; Galadima Abdullahi, “Jos: Destabilizing Islam on the Plateau,” 35, in Danjuma Byang, “Questions and Answers,” in *Today’s Challenge* Jos 5, 28.

<sup>63</sup> This is an Islamic fundamentalist sect in parts of northern Nigeria that is against anything Western, the name “Boko Haram” means “Western Education is bad”. This sect has fermented a lot of crisis in most of northern Nigeria, including the capital city of Nigeria Abuja. Their style of killings now includes the use of suicide bombers. They have claimed responsibility for the bombing of the United Nations House in Abuja and many others in the country.

### Emerging Changing Patterns Of The Conflict

The conflict in Jos has been viewed by the indigenous ethnic groups that formed the area as a continuation of the Uthman Dan Fodio's jihad launched in 1804.<sup>64</sup> The current events are said to have been carried on by the descendants of initiators of the jihad movements through the different stages of the movement's history leading to the Colonial times. And, what was not possible through the force of the jihadist, was possible through Fredrick Lord Lugard's policy of indirect rule.<sup>65</sup> Suffice to say that the encounter of indigenous African communities and Islam has had changing faces right from inception, from the time when Islam was a minority-*Dhimmi*<sup>66</sup> under the largely African indigenous communities to the time when Islam had control of its unsuspecting host. This control occurred as the result of a change in the Muslim approach to the battle over the "soul" of Africa and Africans. John Azumah captures the regrets of one of the proponents of the jihads movement of Uthman Dan Fodio, "writing on Dan Fodio's jihad Umar Abdullahi states that Abdullahi Dan Fodio (d. 1828) – Uthman Dan Fodio's brother and chief ideologue of the Northern Nigerian jihad tradition – was disappointed by the first peaceful method of changing the old order' and 'found he was duty bound' to overthrow 'the said old order intellectually and militarily.'"<sup>67</sup> Azumah argues that

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<sup>64</sup> Dachomo, "Muslim and Christian Perceptions."

<sup>65</sup> The policy of the indirect rule was a policy introduced by the Governor General of northern Nigeria during the colonial period Sir F. Lugard, where non-Muslim, non-hausa communities were placed under the authority of the *Emirs of the North*.

<sup>66</sup> *Dhimmi* is an Islamic term referring to Jewish and Christian's minorities living under the protection of Islam. In this case the term is used to refer to Muslim minorities living under the African majority host.

<sup>67</sup> John Azumah, *The Legacy of Arab-Islam in Africa: Quest for Inter-Religious Dialogue* (Oxford, UK: Oneworld Publications, 2001), 64, in Shehu U. Abdullahi, *On the Search for a Viable Political Culture:*

some Muslims became increasingly convinced that a military jihad was the only alternative means if Islam was to triumph over the old indigenous order because peaceful exchanges had failed.<sup>68</sup> While this militaristic style triggered the jihad movements from its inception, it has remained the main form of continuing the struggle to the present day.

A close look at the conflicts from 2001 and the emerging changes recorded to the present day is useful and necessary. This provides a proper understanding of the issues surveyed as we see the biblical theological implications on the changing attitudes to violence among some Christians in Jos. As mentioned elsewhere in this study, the perceptions of the indigenous communities in Jos eludes to the understanding that the present conflicts are rooted in the events of the past (i.e., the Uthman Dan Fodio jihad of 1804). While the struggle for legitimacy, and the claims for the ownership of Jos, has been a continues one, the September 7, 2001, Jos crisis was unique in itself. It is one of the major conflicts between Muslims and Christians in Jos in a long while. Two of the issues that gave rise to the 2001 crisis were an expansionist and power assertion thrust of the Hausa-Fulani (Muslims) group. The adherents of the two faith communities were living side by side; Muslims and Christians lived in apartments within the same compounds. The level of destruction of life and property was minimized due to the proximity of the parties involved in the crisis. The closer the parties involved in the crisis

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*Reflections on the Political Thoughts of Shaikh Abdullahi Dan Fodio* (Kaduna, Nigeria: Commercial Printing Department, 1984), 39.

<sup>68</sup> Azumah, *The Legacy of Arab-Islam in Africa*, 64, in Abdullahi, *On the Search for a Viable Political Culture: Reflections on the Political Thoughts of Shaikh Abdullahi Dan Fodio*, 39.

were, the more challenging it was for the perpetrators of the carnage to carry on their diabolic acts.

One major shift witnessed after the 2001 conflict was the compartmentalization of the communities in Jos. Muslims lived in some areas in the city while the Christians lived in other parts of the city. Places like Angwan Rogo, Dilime, Bauchi road, parts of Nasarawa are inhabited by the Muslims. Places like Jenta Apata, Laranto, Gada Biyu, Tudun wada and Angwan Rukuba is preserved for Christians. This compartmentalization of the two faith communities made room for growing hatred, suspicion and animosity. The level of destruction not witnessed in 2001, and the complexity of the use of ammunitions in the conflict, increased in the subsequent conflict. Sophisticated arms were employed. The polarization currently being witnessed, even among the security agencies expected to bring succor to the victims of the crisis, was not observed during the 2001 conflicts.

Reported sporadic attacks became the order of the day from one village to the next within Plateau State. While the September, 7, 2001, conflict was mainly within the city of Jos, these latter attacks cut across the entire state with more losses in human life and property. Following is a list of some of the conflicts recorded in Plateau State since the September, 2001 crisis in Jos:

- May, 2<sup>nd</sup> 2002 in the city of Jos. Many people were killed and properties destroyed. Muslims and Christians were among the casualties.
- December, 2002 in the village of Rim, near Jos. This was an attack on a predominantly Christian community by suspected Fulani militias.



- February, 2004 in Yelwa Shendam. 47 Christians were burned in a church, and many houses and properties were destroyed.
- November, 28<sup>th</sup> 2008 in Jos, Plateau State. Over 100 people were killed, 71 churches burned, 1,647 families lost their homes, and 535 businesses were burned or looted.
- December, 27<sup>th</sup> 2009 suspected Muslim youths burned a Baptist church in Yelwa, and a number of Christians were stabbed on the streets of Jos.
- January, 17<sup>th</sup> -21<sup>st</sup>, 2010 suspected Fulani militias unleashed destruction in over 24 communities in Jos North, Jos South, and Barkin Ladi, claiming numerous lives and burning of homes and churches. The Bukuru market in Jos South Local Government Area was also destroyed.<sup>69</sup>

The level and sophistication of this conflict, and the growth in the use of arms, is something worth noting; it has grown to the use of bombs in some cases. As mentioned elsewhere in this thesis, the worrying part of this development is the negative response among some members of the church to this increasing violence on her members.

From the early days of the conflicts, pastors and leaders encouraged members to forgive and practice the way taught by Jesus Christ as contained in the Bible. Major changes were recorded, issues of the third cheek came about, and “the theology of the

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<sup>69</sup> Stefanos Foundation, *Religious Intolerance: A Threat to Nigeria's Unity* (Jos, Nigeria: Stefanos Foundation), 2010. The Stefanos Foundation is a NGO with an office in Jos and have worked with many internally displaced people in northern Nigeria.

wall”<sup>70</sup> was created to help people respond to the violence unleashed on them. The theology of the wall speaks of pushing Christians to the wall, resulting in the Christians’ need to push back and respond violently. Responses to the violence varied, ranging from self-defense to actively going out to attack those on the other side.

Another emerging change in the conflict is the growth of different aspects of the society that seem to be benefiting from the incessant conflict. The first one is the security operatives. The constitutional demand of the military is to protect the territorial integrity of any nation. They fight against enemies of the nation to defend and protect lives and properties of the citizens. However, these expectations are not the reality in certain quarters.<sup>71</sup>

Ever since the Jos crisis brought the military to the streets of Jos, the militia desires to stay the more. This is not disconnected from the benefits they derive due to their stay on the streets of Jos. Apart from the fat allowances paid by the state government to all the security operatives in the task force, it is reported that with the hiring and payments they get to kill, maim, destroy and loot to satisfy the evil of the Hausa/Fulani who provide a lot of financial dividends. The incessant roadblocks they use to collect bribes and to force people to give them money for whatever reason they choose, is not new.<sup>72</sup> Since the conflicts in 2008-2011, the military have been accused of involvement in the systematic killings from one community to the next. The empty

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<sup>70</sup> Mark Hopkins speaks of the “theology of the wall” in “Love Language Vision” (lecture, Jos, Nigeria, February 2009). He states that the aggressors have pushed the victims to the “wall.” Therefore, the need to push back exists.

<sup>71</sup> Gyang Pam, “Why the Military Wants Jos Crisis to Continue,” *The Light Bearer* (June 2010): 4.

<sup>72</sup> Pam, “Why the Military Wants,” 4.

shells of bullets found on the attack sites are witnesses against them, and their bank accounts that keep swelling on a daily basis speak volumes. In one of the attacks in 2010, in a village in Riyom, it was reported that an identity card belonging to one of the “Soldier Killers” was found on the attack site and was displayed by the media. Rev. Dr. Pam captures it well when he wrote that,

The recent clamor for their withdrawal from the State is a clear indication of their complacency and complicity in the crisis. They were caught in the attacks in various places and the confession of Brigadier General Hassan Umaru attested to the fact that soldiers found culpable would be dealt with as reported in the Punch newspapers of February, 5<sup>th</sup> 2011.<sup>73</sup>

Other beneficiaries of the conflict include car dealers, food sellers, government officials, and religious leaders. People who are involved in the purchase and distribution of the security vehicles and security gadgets benefit from the huge security vote allocated to insuring peace during conflict. These car dealers, together with some government officials, benefit from huge financial returns from the purchases of the vehicles and other relief material that are shared to the victims of the crisis. In the recent crisis of September 5, 2011 in Jos, one case involved the government and some religious organizations that benefited from the crisis shamelessly. The Daily Trust newspaper of September 20, 2011, on page 7, and on September 24, carried a report with the headline reading “Jos Crisis: One million displaced persons settle in Bauchi – NEMA.” The body of the story attributed this dubious claim to Muhammad Sani Sidi, the Director General of the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA). The population of persons in distress and displaced, arising from this recent crisis, is in no

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<sup>73</sup> Gyang Pam, “The Different Dimensions to Jos Crisis,” *The Light Bearer* (March 2011): back cover.

way close to this outrageous number quoted by the official of NEMA. This outrageous number by NEMA shows that the agency is nothing but a drainpipe on Nigerian tax payers' money to the pockets of greedy people. The population of Jos, at the last population count, was just about one million people. If a million people are displaced out of Jos, then what remains of Jos?

There are two other worrying aspects of Christians responding to the violence. First, some people from within the church have gone out to try fetish means of attaining protection to fight and defend themselves. This action carries with it a lot of implications. The African Traditional Religion provided the grounds for that to be actualized. Second, *cannibalism has been reported in connection to responses to the conflicts*. This is also from within the church. This emerging change in response to the conflicts is only recorded in the 2010 and the 2011 crises.

In the last two major crises, it was also reported that some of the people involved in the killings moved from just killing and burning the corpses of the dead to eating them.<sup>74</sup> Cannibalism, even though not entirely a new thing among some African tribes in the past, provides a great cause to worry that it is happening in this age and time. Most worrying is that it is happening by people who claim to be fighting for God or in the name of God.

In the past, cannibalism was widespread throughout the world, even continuing into the 19th century in some isolated South Pacific cultures; and, in a few cases in insular Melanesia, indigenous flesh-markets existed. Fiji was once known as the

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<sup>74</sup> Joseph Dalyop, interview by author, July 12, 2011.. Rev. Joseph Dalyop was an eyewitness to this renewed cannibalism during the January, 2010 crisis at Angwan Rukuba, Jos, Central Nigeria.

“Cannibal Isles.” Cannibalism has been well documented around the world, from Fiji to the Amazon Basin, and from the Congo to Māori, New Zealand. In West Africa, the Leopard Society was a secret society active into the mid-1900s and one that practiced cannibalism. Centered in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire, the Leopard men would dress in leopard skins, waylaying travelers with sharp claw-like weapons in the form of leopards' claws and teeth. The victims' flesh would be cut from their bodies and distributed to members of the society.

This is only practiced in secret societies, as mentioned above, or in typical warring situations, but even so, the practice is highly condemnable in most African societies. Cannibalism has recently been both practiced and fiercely condemned in several wars, especially in Liberia and Congo. The practice is condemned by every sense of reason as contradicting the laws of nature.

Closer to home, some of the close neighbors of the Berom people are the Aten, they are found to the southwest of Riyom, and they inhabit a place called Ganawuri where they share common boundaries with the Berom, Irigwe and the Moroa in Kaduna State. Referencing Hale H. Middle's *Plateau Province of Nigeria (1926-1936)*, Ezekiel Chollom states the following about the Aten people: “This tribe's own name for themselves is Aten, with an ‘a’ that is hardly pronounced at all. Their neighbors, the Berom call them ‘Jal’ which means ‘cannibal’ and the Hausas and the British call them ‘Ganawuri’ which means nothing at all. The tribe seems to like the latter, certainly

preferring it to Jal.”<sup>75</sup> He added that even though the name “Jal” was well deserved because the Aten people are an abnormally war-like people who formally ate the bodies of all enemies who were slain in war, this seemingly victorious description of the Aten people is not accepted by the Atens themselves due to the negative connotation that is attached to the act of “cannibal.”

Sadly, this is now a reality in Jos, Plateau, as people seek to respond to the incessant conflict that has engulf the “Tin City.” Whatever the cause for this shift, it is unacceptable and needs to be addressed by all.

Closely related to this change in attitude is a situation in which some “Christians” practiced syncretism by the use of charms and amulets as their source of power and for protection from danger. This has been reported in many instances in the conflicts around Jos and in other conflicts within the middle belt of Central Nigeria.<sup>76</sup>

Professor Best addresses an additional dimension to the conflicts, mainly the May 2004 attacks in Yelwa, during which hundreds of women and children were abducted by militias. These captors took them to different locations in the zone and subjected them to various forms of abuse, ranging from forced labor, child labor, torture and rape. They left their victims deeply traumatized, especially widows and children who witnessed their husbands and parents brutally killed by these aggressors.<sup>77</sup> This

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<sup>75</sup> Ezekiel Chollom, *COCIN in Plateau North: The Foron Centenary (1907-2007)*, (Jos, Nigeria: Sele Press, 2007), 27.

<sup>76</sup> Christopher Luka, “The Effects of Religious Conflicts on COCIN RCC Tafawa Balewa,” (bachelor’s thesis, Gindiri Theological Seminary, May 2010), 36.

<sup>77</sup> Best, *Causes and Effects*, 89.

dimension, though not practiced in the Jos conflict precisely, introduces an important dimension to the conflict on the Plateau more generally.

Finally, the emerging changing patterns of the crisis includes not only the burning of homes as in the past, but now homes are completely brought down to their foundations, as evidenced in Bukuru and parts of Jos.<sup>78</sup> During the crisis, strong young men dedicated most of their time to destroying houses already burned to ensure that the owners of the houses could not return to their property after the crisis. This level of hatred expresses how the violence rages, speaking volumes against the continued existence of the inhabitants of Jos, Plateau.

### **A Biblical Theological Reflection**

The major challenge for the church in Africa, Nigeria, and the Jos Plateau, in particular, is how to face the complexity of life and the issues that come with it today. In his write-up titled, "Theological Anemia in Africa," Byang Kato points out two basic challenges facing the African church, emphasizing that the church is generally unprepared for the challenge because of its theological and biblical ignorance.<sup>79</sup> First, the church is unprepared for the unexpected phenomenal growth evident in the African church. Second, is the existence of a theological ignorance or neglect by the forebearers of the African church.<sup>80</sup> John Mbiti concurs with him when he observed that, "Mission

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<sup>78</sup> Gwamna and Amango, "Sliding Toward Armageddon," 35.

<sup>79</sup> Byang H. Kato, "Theological Anemia in Africa," *Biblical Christianity in Africa* (Bristol, Ireland: Nuprint Services, 1985), 9-10

<sup>80</sup> Kato, "Theological Anemia in Africa," 11.

Christianity was not from the start prepared to face a serious encounter with either traditional religions and philosophy or modern changes taking place in Africa. The church now finds itself in the situation of trying to exist without a theology".<sup>81</sup> The truth is that the challenges posed by fundamentalist sects from Islam in Jos, or elsewhere, are all part of the modern challenges for the African church.

Yusufu Turaki's paper, "Evangelical Missiology from Africa: Strengths and Weaknesses," highlights as one of the major problems of the church in Africa,

A weak biblical and theological base. In other words, there is inadequate biblical teaching in the churches and Christian communities. This area does not refer to the spirituality of the people or theological reflections and expressions of Christianity. Rather, there is inadequate ecclesiology/theology of the church to handle issues as church life, missions, spirituality, morality, social matters, and ethnic/tribal conflicts.<sup>82</sup>

Turaki points out clearly in his list of challenges that the African church faces "the issue of nominalism among second generation Christians. Children born of Christian parents show a lack of interest in Christianity."<sup>83</sup> Suffice to say, most of the challenges the church in Jos has faced in reacting to the conflicts around her is not unconnected to this assertion. The challenges of ethno-religious conflict are not new because they are linked closely to the events of the Islamic jihad against the African Traditional Religion in the past, but in this case it is a challenge to the mostly Christian communities. The various responses to the challenge go a long way to demonstrate an understanding of the biblical and theological implications for the church in Jos. A survey

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<sup>81</sup> Kato, "Theological Anemia in Africa," 11.

<sup>82</sup> Yusufu Turaki, "Evangelical Missiology from Africa: Strengths and Weaknesses" in *Global Missiology for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, ed. William D. Taylor (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2000), 280.

<sup>83</sup> Turaki, "Evangelical Missiology from Africa," 281.



of the biblical and theological issues in the conflict in Jos is necessary, and cannot be overemphasized.

Over the centuries, Christians have debated the legitimacy of the use of violent force and war. Numerous “pacifists” take the view that it is never right to resort to violence. But perhaps, the majority Christian view is something closer to saying that the use of force is always wrong, unless it is more wrong not to. There is nothing more serious in our relations with those around us than the threat of taking the life of another human being created in the image of God.<sup>84</sup>

There are many biblical passages which, on their own, would lead to a thoroughgoing “pacifist” conclusion (e.g., Exodus 20:13, Matthew 5:38-48 and Romans 12:9-20.) But, we need to see the other side of the coin as we attempt to hold the love, mercy and compassion of God’s character reflected with his holiness, righteousness and justice.<sup>85</sup>

In Matthew 6:33, we are exhorted to “seek first his kingdom and his righteousness” – you cannot have one (his kingdom) without the other (his righteousness). Similarly, Paul, in Romans 14: 17, links the two: “The kingdom of God is ...about...righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> John Stott, *Issues Facing Christians Today: New Perspectives on Social and Moral Dilemmas* (London, UK: Harper Collins, 1990), 85.

<sup>85</sup> Alan Chilver, “Is Violence Ever Legitimate” (lecture, Bukuru, Nigeria, October 2001). This paper was presented in the wake of the 2001 ethno-religious crisis in Jos Nigeria.

<sup>86</sup> Chilver, “Is Violence Ever Legitimate,” 10.

In Romans 13, Paul explains how the Lord's justice is achieved through government (Romans 13:1, 4). As we begin to put these together, we can see that, in some circumstances, force may sometimes be used, but not for personal or individual reasons, and not for revenge and the like. This right to rule is not rooted in the consent of the governed, but derives from God (Daniel 5:21).<sup>87</sup>

Christians, in reflecting on the nature of the kingdom of God, have come to two divergent conclusions;

1. The "pacifist" view that, "The kingdom of God is here in its fullness and we can (and should) live as in the kingdom." Stott states the view clearly that the Christian should not

Resist an evil person as the command of Christ. Instead, if he strikes us on the right cheek, we are to turn to him the other also. We are to love our enemies, do good to those who hate us and pray for those who persecute us. Only so can we qualify as children of our Heavenly Father, for his love is indiscriminate, and he gives the blessings of rain and sunshine to the evil and the good alike. To hate those who love us is the devil's way. To love those who love us and hate those who hate us is the way of the world. But if we would follow Jesus, however, and accept the standards of his Kingdom, we must love those who hate us (Matthew 5:38-48; Luke 6:27-36).<sup>88</sup>

Jesus not only taught this view, he practiced it. This teaching moves the church to non-resistance and non-violence. Christians who hold to this total pacifist position call it the way of the cross, "Take up your cross and follow me daily."

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<sup>87</sup> Yusufu Turaki, "The Church and the State," *Africa Bible Commentary*, General Editor Tokumbuh Adeyemo, (Nairobi, Kenya: WordAlive Publishers, 2006), 1371.

<sup>88</sup> Turaki, "Church and State," 87.

2. The view that says, “We must recognize that Christians have to live in a world touched by sin, in which violence is inevitable, and which they have to hold in tension with a moral view of eschatological perfection”. This is the “Just War” tradition.<sup>89</sup>

Earlier, we referred to “the majority Christian view” that believes that the use of force lies within the permissive will of God for our lives in a fallen world. While it is important to respect and to be challenged by the pacifist view, still, many would not take it as the way a responsible Christian society should go when facing the challenges of violence forced on her. The pacifist understanding acts as an important deterrent, and helps those Christians who hold an alternative view to develop proper criteria for, and to set important limitations on, the use of force.

Chilver referred to the following criteria and principles for the use of violence which have been developed over the years, not one of which on its own is an adequate justification: all must be taken into account together:

1. **Just Cause:** The only just cause for the use of violence is defense against violent (and unjustified) aggression against a person, or against a neighbor unable to defend him/herself.
2. **Just Intension:** The only just intension is to restore peace to friend or foe. There must be no motive to revenge or retribution. Just intention demands also proper conduct, avoiding any tendency to hatred or brutality.
3. **Last Resort:** The use of force must be a last resort after every other effort to resolve the situation has been exhausted and failed.
4. **Proper Authority:** The decision to resort to violence must be made by a lawful authority, and should be marked by an official declaration.
5. **Limited Ends:** The use of violence must be for limited ends only- sufficient to repel aggression and to redress injustice.

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<sup>89</sup> Chilver, “Is Violence Ever Legimate,” 9.

6. **Proportionality:** The means of violence used must be proportional to the offence, and necessary to achieve the end intended.
7. **Reasonable Change of Success:** If a just settlement cannot be achieved, the additional suffering caused by violence would serve no purpose; so violence must only be used where there is a reasonable chance of success, and must be discontinued if that chance fades.<sup>90</sup>

The events of the ethno-religious disturbances in Jos, and any future developments, need to be judged against these principles.

Mark Hopkins proposes a biblical view of responding to the crisis in Jos with the name “Love Language Vision.”<sup>91</sup> The biblical text that inspired the proposal is John 8:31-47. It is a dialogue between Jesus and some Jews who believed in him. The issues that came out of the dialogue brought out a very important concept about the origin of violence and the relationship of that source of violence to those who practice it. The language we speak, which is called our mother tongue, shows our parentage. This biblical view asserts that by speaking the language of lies and murder the Jews show clearly that the devil is their father; in contrast, Jesus speaks his Father’s language of truth and love.

As already mentioned elsewhere in this study, the implications for speaking a language do not depend on any side of the divide; rather, it shows your parentage, either God or Satan. The argument for speaking both languages is also strongly opposed by the Bible. James 3:9-12 found this unnatural, saying, “A tree does not bear two kinds of fruit, nor does a spring produce fresh and salt water by turns, so how can we praise

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<sup>90</sup> Chilver, “Is Violence Ever Legitimate,” 11.

<sup>91</sup> Professor Mark Hopkins is a professor of Church History with the Theological College of Northern Nigeria, Bukuru, Nigeria. He has taught there for the last 20 years.

God and then curse men?” By implication, we must trust God and speak his language of truth and love in all situations.

The view proposes that Christians, on an individual level be engaged in speaking the language of our Father which is love, among other Christians and Muslims in such a way as to transform our relationship with all men. This would bring love to its rightful place at the heart of the life of the churches of Christ worldwide. It would transform relationships between Christian and Muslim communities, and it would lead Muslims into God’s loving family through faith in Christ.<sup>92</sup>

The love language vision maintains a Bible-based position on responding to violence unleashed on a Christian community. One, Christians must walk with Jesus Christ on the way of the cross in this life, speaking the language of their Father: love. This should be done in the grace that Christ gives to all who deny themselves to follow him faithfully. Two, justice must also be pursued in matters relating to violence unleashed on a people, and the tools of justice put in place by the government must be used to insure justice and equity.

### **Conclusion**

The conflict in Jos seems to have defied all suggested solutions. From the conflicts in 2001, the effort put into bringing peace to Jos by the federal and state governments, together with many non-governmental organizations, have yielded some positive results. But, the continuing reoccurrence of the conflict has made it necessary

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<sup>92</sup> Mark Hopkins, “Love Language Vision Materials” unpublished material, 1.

for a study from this perspective. While losses recorded at the end of every round of the crisis in Jos are counted, this present study emphasizes the negative implications due to the reaction of some Christians from within the church. Christians must realize God's sovereignty, even in times of conflict. God still exists, and he is active in our lives, even in our most trying times. Remember the word of God in Matthew 10:28-31:

Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather be afraid of God, who can destroy both body and soul in hell. For only a penny you can buy two sparrows, yet not one sparrow falls to the ground without your Father's consent. As for you, even the hairs of your head have all been counted. So do not be afraid; you are worth much more than many sparrows.

The study, based on the analyses of the historical records and close application of the biblical thought on the matter, recommends the following as a remedy to the incessant crises on the Jos, Plateau:

1. Churches in Jos should reawaken the sound teaching of God's word, not only allowing the gospel to shape what they believe, but also their actions. The conflict should serve as a medium whereby Christians in Jos are drawn to God and toward unity with one another. The history of the church has proven that in most cases the church flourishes in the midst of difficulties. Our understanding of Jesus Christ and what he stood for, even died for, should be our model. Dietrich Bonhoeffer puts it rightly, "The passion of Christ is the victory of divine love over the powers of evil, and therefore it is the only supportable basis for Christian obedience. Once again, Jesus calls those who follow him to share his passion. How can we convince the world by our preaching of the passion when

we shrink from that passion in our own lives?”<sup>93</sup> The church in Jos, and elsewhere, must put into practice the call of the Lord as an important aspect of her calling. The Love Language Vision should be imbibed by a wider range of churches in Jos, facing similar changes as a way to remain faithful to the teachings of “Our Father.”

2. Christians must know that they have a God-given mandate to fulfill. Paul says, “God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself...entrusting us with the message of reconciliation, so we are ambassadors of Christ, God making his appeal through us.”<sup>94</sup> Ndirmbita affirms that this truth must not be compromised for the sake of peace. This is a God-given mandate that must not be toyed with for whatever reason.<sup>95</sup> This divine mandate should spur on the church in Jos to remain faithful to proclaiming the message of the gospel to her Muslim friends.
3. Christians and churches must take seriously the issue of conversion and a life lived in Christ. Most of the church members that seem to be rejoicing over the killings of Muslims, and even participating in some of the atrocities mentioned in this present study, may not have had a genuine salvation experience in Christ. Christians must be prepared to give up everything for the sake of Christ. In times of conflict, everything that defines who we are may be taken from us: our families, our homes, our possessions, our work, and even our lives. One thing that must not be taken away from us is Jesus Christ. Our life today, and in the

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<sup>93</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (Kent, UK: SCM Press, 1966), 130.

<sup>94</sup> 2 Corinthians 19-20.

<sup>95</sup> Ndirmbita, “Inter-Religious Conflicts,” 94.

future, finds it's meaning in him (1 Peter 1:3-6). Christians should not be guided by their fears and hates but by what the love and respect: God's word.

4. The church in Jos, and in Africa, must develop a biblical-theological response to the conflicts around her. The role of the many theological seminaries hosted in Jos now comes into focus. Theologians from the seminaries must have a forum where issues related to the conflicts in Jos are properly addressed and biblical-theological positions presented on how to respond.
5. Christians must voluntarily give up their cultural prejudices. Old ways of judging others must go because they are worldly and they cause divisions (2 Corinthians 5:16-18).
6. The compartmentalization of settlements in Jos and environs must also be stopped. The government and religious leaders should work towards reintegration of the communities. The security agencies now working to restore peace in the embattled city should take this as one of their major and critical assignments in this exercise. This action would avert the sad stories of complete genocide recorded in places like Rwanda.
7. Christians in Jos must take the message of reconciliation to heart. Rodger Petch highlighted an approach to mutuality and respect by Jeremy Hinds as, "A ministry of reconciliation rather than alienation will develop in the local community, secondly, that the Christian witness will be better able to get



alongside and understand the non-Christian group and thirdly, the church will earn the respect of such groups because you have taken an interest in them.”<sup>96</sup>

8. There is the need to establish a truth and reconciliation commission on the Jos conflict. This would create an opportunity for discussions of the past that can eventually bring healing. It is in this regard that Henderson refers to a study by Joseph Monville (a former state department officer who runs the preventive diplomacy program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies Washington, D.C.) into the healing of historical feuds. Monville submits that, “Many of our less successful peace agreements are so because there has been no underlying process of healing relationships.”<sup>97</sup> Monville’s study, as examined by Henderson, focuses particularly on the question of ethnic and sectarian conflicts, which usually involve people who have endured aggression and loss simply because they are part of an identifiable group, not because of anything they have done. Aggression on the victim usually leads to distrusting the authors of their loss, or even their descendants in any negotiation or interaction. This is evident in the growing evidence of mistrust and acrimony witnessed in the Jos conflict among the Christian and Muslim communities.<sup>98</sup> This strategy, as suggested by Monville, is what is needed in a context like the one in Jos. He

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<sup>96</sup> Rodger Petch, “Jeremy Hinds: Teacher and Apologist to Christians and Muslims,” *TCNN Bulletin* 47 (March 2007), 9.

<sup>97</sup> M. Henderson, *Forgiveness: Breaking the Chain of Hate*, (Portland, OR: Arnica Publishing, 2003), 11.

<sup>98</sup> Dachomo, “Muslim and Christian Perception,” 62.

suggests an “acknowledgement-contrition-forgiveness transaction.”<sup>99</sup> This means that the interactive part of the healing begins when the aggressors, or their successors, acknowledge the tragedy and injustices of recent or historic losses as a result of their actions. And when this acknowledgement is sincere, complete and detailed, the victim group can begin to believe that it is possible to trust the good faith of the aggressor in current negotiations and future relationships.<sup>100</sup> Admitting the ills of the past done in the name of a tradition now honored by a group is vital in understanding and comprehending current conflicts in Jos, Central Nigeria.

Lastly, conflicts must be avoided by all and sundry. This is the best step toward dealing with this challenge.<sup>101</sup> He rightly quotes Proverbs 20:3, “Any fool can start an argument; but the honorable thing is to stay out of them.” Rev. Dr. Obed Dashan shares this meaningful conclusion when he states, “Conflicts are easier to avoid than they are to stop.”<sup>102</sup> Most importantly, the gospel must daily shape our thoughts as well as our actions as “true followers” of the Lord of the church.

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<sup>99</sup> Henderson, *Forgiveness*, 62.

<sup>100</sup> Henderson, *Forgiveness*, 62.

<sup>101</sup> Ndirmbita, “Inter-Religious Conflicts,” 91.

<sup>102</sup> Obed Dashan, “Conflict Resolution: Theory and Practice” (paper presented to International Conference on Christian-Muslim Relations, Jos), in Ndirmbita, “Inter-Religious Conflicts,” 92.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

#### **Introduction**

The biblical-theological issues that are connected to this study are profound. Christianity will only remain relevant as long as the message of the Gospel is central in belief and practice. The following theological framework will be exegetical and analytical in nature. Major concepts that are addressed run throughout Scripture. They are violence, repentance, forgiveness and reconciliation.

#### **Violence**

The word violence occurs fifty-three times in the NIV; seventeen times in the Old Testament and in two New Testament books. Seventeen of the sixty-six Bible books expressly use the word “violence.” Psalms alone registers twelve occurrences, followed by Proverbs and Ezekiel, both with seven each. Jeremiah has five, closely followed by Isaiah with four; Genesis and Habakkuk with three each and Zephaniah with two. Chronicles, Job, Hosea, Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, Malachi, Acts and Revelation have only one occurrence each.

Nuwoe-James Kiamu states, “This may be why many Christians believe that the Old Testament contains more violence material than the New Testament.” He further argues,

This distribution pattern by itself could be misleading if one relies on it to understand the occurrences of violence in the Bible. Yet, it may be pointing to

the effect of progressive revelation by which God is moving human history from one point to another, first from a period of complete peace at Creation, to the period of intense violence through the history of the children of Israel, gradually reducing into the time of the New Testament. It then looks into a future when violence will be no more.<sup>1</sup>

This is a period in which Satan and evil is conquered forever. This understanding presupposes that the biblical-theological record of violence is something that will survive for a while, and that all human experience and history is gradually approaching a time of peace without violence, which will be completed in the eschatological events. This is key to understanding the central issues related to this present study.

### The Term Violence

This is behavior involving physical force intended to hurt, damage, or kill. It could also be strength of emotion or an unpleasant or destructive force.<sup>2</sup> It could also be natural force, passion and intensity.<sup>3</sup> The exertion of physical force so as to injure or abuse as in warfare effecting illegal entry into a house. It is also injury by distortion, infringement, or profanation.<sup>4</sup> The violence unleashed on lives and properties in the Jos crisis is always aimed at inflicting hurt, damaging property, and in extreme cases, the

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<sup>1</sup> Kiamu Nuwoe-James, "The Mind of Christ: A Paradigm Toward a Biblical Theology of Transformational and Proactive Response to Violence" (Ph.D thesis, University of Jos, Nigeria, 2006), 11.

<sup>2</sup> *The Reader's Digest Word Power Dictionary*, s.v. "violence" (London, UK: Oxford University, 2001), 1095.

<sup>3</sup> *Queen's English Dictionary and Thesaurus of the English Language*, s.v. "violence" (London, UK: Parragon, 2002), 362

<sup>4</sup> *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary and Thesaurus in Encyclopedia Britannica*, CD-ROM, Student Home Edition, s.v. "violence" (Chicago, IL: Encyclopedia Britannica, 2013).

death of many people. From 2001 to the present conflict, an estimated 6,000 lives have been lost in the Jos crisis.<sup>5</sup>

### Violence in the Old Testament

In most cases, the word “violence,” or “violent,” in the Old Testament is *hamas*. It is a strong word, not associated with violent upheavals of nature, but with the willfully destructive acts of human beings. The first use of the word describes the “great wickedness” and continually evil acts of the pre-flood generation in these words: “The earth was corrupt in God’s sight and was full of violence” (Genesis 6:11).<sup>6</sup> The other derivative of this word, *gazel*, is used in the Old Testament.<sup>7</sup> Two other words are also used and translated as “violence” or “violent.” These words are *aris*, which means a “violent or ruthless person,” and the other, *paras*, describes one who maliciously tears down rather than builds.<sup>8</sup> In Genesis, it is associated with judgment. It implies that as the Flood came on the violent generation, so will “disaster hunt down men of violence” (Psalm 140:11).<sup>9</sup>

The description of the word in this early Old Testament understanding is important. The willful destructive actions of human beings, a ruthless person, and one

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<sup>5</sup> D.J. Gwamna, *Religion and Politics in Nigeria* (Jos, Nigeria: African Christians Textbooks, 2010), 46.

<sup>6</sup> Lawrence O. Richards, “Violence,” *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1985), 612.

<sup>7</sup> James Orr, ed., “Violence,” *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1955), 3051.

<sup>8</sup> Richards, “Violence,” 612.

<sup>9</sup> Richards, “Violence,” 612.

who maliciously tears down rather than builds up, all speaks of the negative implication of being or becoming violent. This present study is built on this biblical-theological understanding.

### Violence in the New Testament

In the New Testament, several different terms for “violence” and “violent” are found. In Matthew 8:28, the demon-possessed men were *chalepos*, “dangerous” or “violent”.<sup>10</sup> In this usage of the word, as in the Old Testament, it connotes a negative sense. This same understanding is found elsewhere in the New Testament (2 Timothy 3:1).<sup>103</sup> A second understanding of the word violent or violence in the New Testament is the violent earthquakes of Matthew 28:2 and Acts 16:26. Literally, the word in this second understanding means “great.” The use of the word in Acts 2:2 is the other appearance of the word meaning a “rushing” wind from heaven, with the root in the Greek as *biazo* which means “to apply force” or “to use violence.” However, in this case, the usage does not imply wicked or negative intension as observed in the OT and the first usage in the New Testament.<sup>11</sup>

Matthew 11:12 is another key verse for the use of the word and its implication: “From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence and the violent take it by force.” This verse has resulted in a host of interpretations of the word. The following interpretation does justice both to the

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<sup>10</sup> Richards, “Violence,” 613.

<sup>11</sup> Richards, “Violence,” 613.

context and to the language: "From the days of John the Baptist until now" means "from the time of the activity of John the Baptist." This expression does not say that John inaugurated the kingdom, only that during his time of ministry, it was inaugurated and attacked. The expression assumes that the crucial period of his ministry, during which the kingdom was inaugurated, lies in the past. That kingdom has now begun, in preliminary a way, with Jesus' preaching and powerful works during "the days of John the Baptist," and it is continuing to the present day. Thus, there is no reason why the Prophets and the Law should not prophesy "until John" in an inclusive sense (v.13). The phrase, "the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing," suggests that the kingdom has come with holy power and magnificent energy that has been pushing back the frontiers of darkness. This is especially manifest in Jesus' miracles and ties in with Jesus' response to the Baptist (v.5). Some kind of compulsion, even of people, is presupposed elsewhere (Luke 14:23). The second aspect of this text is that, "The violent take it by force." Who are those forceful men that would want to take the kingdom by force? Three answers are possible: true disciples, other aspirants, or enemies of the kingdom – perhaps, the scribes and Pharisees. If the last group is adopted, it suggests that those who will take the kingdom by violence are the enemies of the kingdom.<sup>13</sup>

However, in the epistles, we return to the Old Testament image of violence as wicked acts directed against others. This understanding is illustrated in 1 Timothy 1:13: "Even though I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and a man of violence... but I

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<sup>13</sup> W.H. Dundas, "Violence," *A Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*, ed. James Hastings, (Edinburgh, Scotland: T & T Clark, 1951), 804.

acted ignorantly in unbelief.” The word *hybristes* describes a “violent or insolent person.” Its other uses, all in the writings of Paul, are referred to in the list of the attributes of leaders in 1 Timothy 3:3 and Titus 1:7 which portray a bully always willing to impose his will on others by wounding them.<sup>14</sup> The dominant concept of evil and wrong in the act of violence is again revisited in the epistles. Biblically and theologically, violence in the Bible takes on a negative connotation.

### **Repentance**

In general terms, repentance is an intense feeling of remorse for past actions, or at not having performed good actions, and the resolution to embark upon a new life in which the failures of the past are put aside and a moral renewal is undertaken. In a religious context, repentance is understood as a turning back to God. The individual or community repents of their previous life, during which they exercised a disregard for God and ignored his commandments, and resolves to embark upon a life that is centered on God. Repentance can also be understood as the removal of those barriers that impede a person’s relationship with God, thereby enabling God’s grace and forgiveness to flow freely to the repentant individual or community. It therefore consists of a double movement; one, a movement away from sin or Satan, and two, a movement toward good and God. This concept plays a very important role in most world religions. In Christianity specifically, repentance plays a central place in the message of the prophets in the Old Testament and in the message of the Gospels and the rest of the

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<sup>14</sup> Richards, “Violence,” 612.



New Testament all together. The realization of one's present position without God is essential to understanding the need for repentance. This is also applied to a community or a group of people, regardless of affiliation.

### The Term Repentance

The most common term for "repentance" in the Old Testament is expressed in the translation of the Hebrew word for "turn back" (Jeremiah 8:4; Ezekiel 33:19). This expression occurs frequently in the Prophets. Less commonly used is the Hebrew word translated as "to be sorry." This second expression of the word appears in Exodus 13:17 Psalm 106:45. In the Septuagint, the word "turn back" is translated by the Greek word as "turn about" and "turn back." The second expression, "to be sorry," was translated in the LXX to mean, "to change one's mind" and "to repent."

In the New Testament, the verb "repent" occurs thirty two times in verses such as Matthew 3:2; 4:17; and 11:20. The noun "repentance" occurs twenty-two times in verses such as Matthew 3:8; Mark 1:4; and Luke 3:3. Another version of the verb in the Greek translated as "to change one's mind" appears six times. And the second version of the noun also translated as "turning back or conversion" occurs in Acts 15:3.<sup>15</sup> The understanding of the term "repentance" in the Old and New Testaments agrees with the general understanding of the word in the sense that the central theme in the use of the word is a call to turn away from a wrong to a right, evil to good, Satan to God.

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<sup>15</sup> W. A. Quanbeck, "Repentance," *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible: An Illustrated Encyclopedia*, ed. George Arthur Buttrick (New York, NY: Abingdon, 1962), 33.

## Repentance in the Old Testament

The two chief forms of repentance in the Old Testament were cultic and ritual. These forms are expressed by the sinner, where he might signal his or her repentance through fasting, weeping, rending garments, and donning sackcloth and ashes (2 Samuel 12:13-17; Jonah 3:5-10).<sup>16</sup> Israel owes obedience to Yahweh, and when such obedience fails, it falls under judgment. Israel can only recover his favor by renouncing sin and turning back to him. Defeat in warfare or failure of bumper harvest is understood as a manifestation of the divine wrath and becomes an occasion for repentance. For the Israelites this concept of repentance is applicable both to the nation and to all individuals that make up the nation. Therefore, there are days of national repentance, such as those described in Nehemiah 9. An individual may also experience judgment and have to turn back to God, as in the case of Ahab when Elijah denounced him (1 Kings 21). Relationship with God in this case is both personal and collective as a nation. Repentance can be personal and collective. Genuine repentance leads to obedience, a rejection of all idols, and a refusal to lean upon human understanding and help. The Old Testament stresses that repentance is a renewal of life, and as such, it demands a new heart and spirit (Ezekiel 18:31). In fact, repentance is a human possibility because it is the result of divine redemption (Isaiah 44:22; Jeremiah 31:33; Ezekiel 11:19; 36:36).<sup>17</sup>

This present study is built on this major theological theme of repentance.

Christians in Jos, Plateau State, and other parts of Nigeria face persecution and violence,

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<sup>16</sup> Bruce M. Metzger and Micheal D. Coogan, eds, *Oxford Companion to the Bible* (Oxford, UK: OUP, 1993), 646.

<sup>17</sup> Quanbeck, "Repentance," 34.

and those who have responded in ways that are sinful must see the need for repentance. This is because genuine repentance leads to obedience to God's word, a rejection of all forms of idols and a refusal to lean on human understanding and help. Earlier, it was noted that changes in attitude to violence are a present reality among Christians in the area under study. These changes include, planning attacks of violence on a people considered to be enemies and on the wrong side of the divide, fetishism and cannibalism. All those who profess Christ as Lord and Savior, and who still partake in those changes noted above, must see the need for personal as well as corporate repentance.

### Repentance in the New Testament

The New Testament has a strong evidence of the continuation of the prophetic demand to repentance in the person of John the Baptist. This is captured in Matthew 3:8, 10, "Bear fruit that befits repentance...Every tree...that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire." A new dimension and development is his relating of repentance to the imminent kingdom of God and to a baptism granting forgiveness of sins. The preaching of Jesus followed this pattern in the Gospels. Jesus teaches that repentance is necessary for life under the kingly rule of God (Mark 1:15; Luke 13:1-3).

This teaching on repentance involves the total person: "The tree is known by its fruit" (Matthew 12:33); "Cleanse the inside of the cup and of the plate, that the outside also may be clean" (Matthew 23:26; Mark 7:15). However, Jesus deepens the prophetic demand in his interpretation of the inwardness of sin (Matthew 5:28) by his insistence

on the second mile and love to enemies (Matthew 5:41; 5:44). The second level of the deepening of the prophetic demands by Jesus is the radical rejection of everything that hinders one's return to God (Matthew 5:29; 6:19; 7:13; Mark 3:31-35; 10:21). Therefore, repentance means becoming another person. Jesus says in Matthew 18:3, "Unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."

The key to the preaching of Jesus on repentance is that repentance is beyond human power. While the prophets in the Old Testament preached that God would give the sinner a new heart and spirit, looking to the future, Jesus announced that the time has come: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the Gospel" (Mark 1:15). Repentance is no longer an impossibility; rather, it is demanded, for "what is impossible with men is possible with God" (Mark 10:27).

In the preaching of the apostolic church, repentance is basic (Acts 3:19; 5:31; 2 Corinthians 7:9; Hebrew 6:1; Revelation 2:21). Repentance is connected with baptism as the beginning of the life in Christ (Acts 2:38; 13:24; 19:4). It is related to faith and to forgiveness (Acts 20:21; 26:18; Luke 24:47; Acts 3:19; 8:22). It is a turn away from evil and a turn to God (Acts 3:26; 8:22; 2 Corinthians 12:21; 1 Peter 2:25; Revelation 16:9). This is based on the work of Christ.

The term repentance does not occur in the fourth Gospel or in the Johannine letters. This not to say that the word, or even the concept, has no place in the life of a Christian. It is suggested that the lack of use of the term may point to the development of specialized theological vocabularies that emphasize the newness in the Christian

life.<sup>19</sup> For both Paul and John, repentance is included in faith. The faith that we have in Christ makes new people in Him. That is what brings the newness that is needed in a life lived for and in Christ. The other major biblical-theological theme closely related to repentance is forgiveness. These two are connected by a life lived in faith.

### **Forgiveness**

Forgiveness in the Bible is primarily an act of God by which he graciously takes away the obstacles and barriers that separate man from his presence, opening the way to reconciliation and fellowship. Second, it is man's forgiveness of his neighbor. This aspect becomes very prominent in the teachings of Jesus. Both acts of forgiveness are central for establishing a biblical-theological basis for this present study.

#### **The Term Forgiveness**

Forgiveness is expressed by a number of different metaphors in both Hebrew and Greek. In biblical Hebrew, the metaphors of "sending away," "covering," "removing," and "wiping away," are used to express the notion of "forgiveness." The most common term is the Hebrew word translated "to send away" (Leviticus 4:20, 26; 1 Kings 8:30, 34; Psalms 86:5; 103:3). The verb "to cover," is especially frequent in the priestly tradition and expresses the idea of "atonement" or "propitiation" (Exodus 29:36; 30:10; Leviticus 8:15; 16:20; Ezekiel 43:20; 45:20). Other expressions of forgiveness are the verb "to wipe away" (Psalm 51:1, 7; Isaiah 43:25; 44:22); "to lift

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<sup>19</sup> Quanbeck, "Repentance," 34.

away, remove” (Genesis 50:17; Psalm 32:5); and “to cover” (Nehemiah 4:5; Psalms 32:1; 85:2). The noun however uses the picture of “removal” to express “forgiveness” (Psalm 130:4; Daniel 9:9).<sup>20</sup>

In the Septuagint, the most common term for “forgiveness” is the Greek “to send away” which translates the Hebrew “to cover” and “to send away.” It is also rendered in Greek “to be merciful.” However, in the Septuagint, the translation of the words in the Greek that mean “to cover,” “to conceal,” “to wipe away,” are translated as the noun “atonement.”

The most common words for “forgiveness” in the New Testament is the verb “to send away” (Matthew 6:12, 14 – 15; 9: 2; 12: 31), and the noun translated as “sending away” (Mark 3:29; Luke 3:3; 24:47; Acts 2:38), used both of God’s forgiveness of sin and of man’s forgiveness of his neighbor’s offenses. Another sense of the use of a Greek verb translated as “to lose away,” and “to be gracious to”, stresses the generosity and graciousness of forgiveness.<sup>21</sup>

Taking a close look at the etymology of the word forgiveness, it speaks of a great sense of covering, letting go, sending away, graciously and generously. As a concept, this term is an important biblical-theological theme for this study. Conflicts in Jos must be viewed from this perspective for any meaningful resolution of the issues that led to the conflict.

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<sup>20</sup> W. A. Quanbeck, “Forgiveness,” *Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible: An Illustrated Encyclopedia*, ed George Arthur Buttrick (New York, NY: Abingdon, 1962), 315.

<sup>21</sup> Quanbeck, “Forgiveness,” 315.

## Forgiveness in the Old Testament

The etymology and the early use of the word in Hebrew and Greek metaphors have revealed much of the use of the word in both the Old and New Testaments. Yet, a closer look at how it is used in the scriptures is needful. Forgiveness is an expression of the religious relationship between God and man. God is Creator, Sustainer, and Judge of all the earth. Man is his creature, lives by his bounty, but is separated from him by his sin, and therefore needs forgiveness because he cannot live under God's wrath. Indeed, when sins are forgiven, reconciliation is possible and man will experience again the blessings of fellowship with God.<sup>22</sup> In his work on forgiveness, Quanbeck states that the Israelites experienced God under the following themes:

1. God forgives: The story of the Israelites is that of encountering a God of power, who is the Lord of all the earth, and all that exists is the result of his creative will. He sends rain and harvest, grants strength and health to his creatures, and assigns the conditions of their existence (2 Samuel 22:32-42; Job 26:6-14; Psalm 65:6-8). But where sin separates man from God, man does not experience God's blessing. Even though God's gifts sustain him, he does have a peace and fullness of life until, through forgiveness, God's blessing can rest on him (Psalm 32:3-4).

This God of the Israelites is the Holy One. He cannot endure evil or impurity. He is a jealous God and will not tolerate violation of his law (Leviticus 11:44-45; Deuteronomy 7:6; 20:7). This holiness is necessary for harmonious human life, and man therefore, needs the holiness of God in his life. Man cannot

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<sup>22</sup> Quanbeck, "Forgiveness," 315.

approach God. Only the removal of sin can enable man to have a life of integrity and wholeness. Another understanding of this God is that he is also merciful (1 Kings 8:23; Psalm 13:5; Isaiah 60:10). He has no pleasure in the death of a sinner.

Through the covenant, he offers mercy to his people, granting the assurance of his favor through the acts of worship he has established. In spite of man's backsliding and unfaithfulness, the covenant relies not on the achievements of man, but upon the righteousness and reliability of God (1 Kings 8:30; 130:3-4; Jeremiah 31:34).

2. The need of forgiveness: Sin is a fundamental distortion of human personality; its repercussions in human life are manifold and devastating. The Old Testament has several words for "sin," expressing different aspects of man's separation from God. Sin is disobedience, straying from the will of God (Psalms 32:1, 5; 51:2). It is trespass or wickedness, an informed and deliberate violation of the law (Isaiah 53:8; 59:20; Micah 3:8). It is perversity, a rebellion of the human spirit. It is iniquity or vanity, the pathetic emptiness of the creature trying to wage war with his Creator. Therefore as a consequence of sin, man has lost fellowship with God. He is cut off from the source of life; his soul is crippled.

Man's capacity to be what God has created him to be is reduced, and in some cases, completely denied. Man lives under the wrath of God, filled with anxieties and fears, and out of harmony with nature and with his fellow man. But, God created man for a life of peace and harmony both with him and his fellow man; he now lives in frustration. Therefore, forgiveness is the removal of



the barriers between God and man. Sin is covered, removed, sent away, and wiped away. God has cast it behind his back (Isaiah 38:17), or into the depths of the sea (Micah 7:19). Forgiveness renews fellowship with God, who is the source of all holiness and life. His mercy and favor replace his wrath and judgment, so that the entire environment of human life has new possibilities. The created world is sanctified to man again, and new relationships become possible in community and family. Terror of conscience, and dread of judgment, give way to peace. Man's soul is healed; the powers of his personality are restored and strengthened.<sup>23</sup> This understanding of the hope of harmonious relationships of communities and individuals is possible when forgiveness is attained. This is paramount to the issues of violence in Jos being settled.

3. The way of forgiveness: In the Old Testament, there are ways in which forgiveness can be obtained. The covenant is the main one. Israel's assurance that sin can be forgiven rests ultimately upon its covenant relationship with God. Yahweh has made himself known as the one unique God. He has chosen Israel as the object of his mercy and love, not because he needs them, but for them to be an instrument through which other people might come to know him. Second, the way of forgiveness is through the sacrificial cultus. The chief instrument for the realization of forgiveness in the Old Testament is through participating in the act of sacrificing something to appease for the sin committed. This is

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<sup>23</sup> Quanbeck, "Forgiveness," 316.

common in most of the religions of the Old Testament world.<sup>24</sup> The understanding of the Israelites gradually began to change with the awareness of the implication of the covenant. However, the Old Testament itself makes it clear that the prophetic understanding of the covenant religion did not always prevail in Israel. Nevertheless the Israelite, living as he did in an environment permeated with the atmosphere of sacrifice, would find it more significant than we can in our attempts to understand it. The sacrificial cultus was a significant agent in the tradition of the religion of the Israelites. The third element in the realization of forgiveness is repentance. Yahweh reveals himself as a person and deals with his people in a personal way.<sup>25</sup> The intense feeling of remorse at past actions, or at not having performed good actions, and the resolution to embark upon a new life in which the failures of the past are put aside, is expressed through repentance. The prophets of the Old Testament would insist on it so that the people, as individuals and as a community, would amend and restore broken relationships with God and with one another.

### Forgiveness in the New Testament

Jesus Christ taught that forgiveness is a duty. No limit can be set to the extent of forgiveness (Luke 17:4), and that forgiveness must be granted without reserve. Jesus will not admit that there is any wrong so gross or so often repeated that it is beyond

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<sup>24</sup> Rosemary Goring, ed., *Wordsworth Dictionary of Beliefs and Religion* (Edinburgh, Scotland: W & R Chambers, 1992), 451.

<sup>25</sup> Quanbeck, "Forgiveness," 316.

forgiveness. To him an unforgiving spirit is one of the most dreadful of sins.<sup>26</sup> This is the offence that God will not forgive (Matthew 18:34-35). It is the very essence of the unpardonable sin (Mark 3:22-30). This natural pagan spirit of revenge Jesus decides to displace by a generous forgiving spirit. In fact, for pagans, forgiveness was not a virtue because to forgive was an evidence of a weak spirit. Jesus repeatedly asserts that man cannot be forgiven if he will not forgive his fellow man (Matthew 6:14; Mark 11:4; 17:3).<sup>27</sup>

This way is not the way of the “world” nor at all the way of the “natural” man. It stands in contrast with our disposition today. Jesus, in his answer to Peter that one should forgive not merely seven times in a day, but seventy times seven (Matthew 18:21-22), not only shows that Jesus thought of no limit to one’s forgiveness, but that the principle could not be reduced to a definite formula. However, Jesus recognized that there are conditions to be fulfilled before forgiveness can be granted. We will look at them as follows:

1. Forgiveness Is Part of a Mutual Relationship: The other part of forgiveness is the repentance of the offender. God does not forgive without repentance, nor is it required of man. The effect of forgiveness is to restore a relationship to its former state before it was broken by sin. Such a restoration requires the cooperation of both parties. There must be both a granting and an acceptance of the forgiveness. In this case, repentance plays a quality role in ensuring that

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<sup>26</sup> Quanbeck, “Forgiveness,” 316.

<sup>27</sup> Wm. Chas. Morro, “Forgiveness,” *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, ed. James Orr, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1955), 1133.

forgiveness is attained. Jesus commands forgiveness when the offender turns again, saying, "I repent" (Luke 17:3-4). It was this state of mind that led the father to joyfully welcome the prodigal before he even gave utterance to his newly formed purpose. This concept is central as a biblical-theological theme when we consider issues of violence in our communities. Forgiveness must be offered without limits.

2. The Offended Party: What happens if the offender refuses to repent? Does his lack of repentance take away the obligation to extend forgiveness? This is a very practical situation in most crisis areas. Without the repentance of the one who has wronged him, he can have a forgiving state of mind. This is what Jesus requires when he said, "This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart" (Matthew 18:35). It is also implied in the Lord's prayer by the past tense, "as we also have forgiven those who trespass against us" (Matthew 6:12). It is this forgiving spirit that conditions God's forgiveness of our sins (Mark 11:25; Matthew 6:14-15). However, in this case, the unforgiving spirit is essentially unrepentance (Matthew 18:23-35). An added dimension to the offended party scenario is that, the offended is to go even further to seek to bring the offender to repentance. Jesus says, "If your brother sins against you go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over" (Matthew 18:15).<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Morro, "Forgiveness," 1133.

The offended party must carry the pursuit of the offender to the point of making every reasonable effort to win the wrongdoer, and only when he has exhausted all the ways of bringing back the wrongdoer with no practical success is he advised to cease his effort. This concept of forgiveness speaks volumes to the situation in Jos. Offended Christians must seek to find ways of forgiving, being in the right spirit even before being asked to forgive. The truth is, that in this case, the offended may not ever come to ask for forgiveness. But when the person offended places himself in the right spirit, ready to forgive for the sake of Christ, it gives room for hope and peace in future relations.

### **Reconciliation**

The word reconciliation indicates a change in social relationship in which two or more parties, previously at enmity with each other, exchange friendship and peace. However, God's reconciliation with man is the basis for all reconciliation that affects man.

### **The Term Reconciliation**

The use of the term is closely associated with the word atonement. Greco-Roman authors, including the Jewish historian Josephus, employ the language of reconciliation in the contexts of conflict between warring parties, whether military, marital conflict, or conflict between citizens.<sup>29</sup> The word occurs in four different verbs in

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<sup>29</sup> A. Andrew Das, "Reconciliation," *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, vol 4, ed Katherine Doob Sakenfeld, (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2009), 745.

the Greek and once as a noun. The first is in Matthew 5:24: "Leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled with your brother; then come and offer your gift." The use of the word urges reconciliation with one's brother before one makes an offering on an altar. The second usage is found in Acts 7:26: "The next day Moses came upon two Israelites who were fighting. He tried to reconcile them by saying, 'Men, you are brothers, why do you want to hurt each other?'" (Exodus 2:11-15). In this case Moses attempts to resolve a dispute between two Hebrews. In the third usage it is rather a more important word, occurring in crucial passages such as Romans 5:10 and 2 Corinthians 5:18-20. The Corinthian passage reads as follows:

All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: That God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

The use of the word in this sense shows that reconciliation is first with God through Christ. And all who are in Christ are entrusted with the task of reconciling the world to God. The use of the Greek noun is in Romans 5:11: "Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation." Here, the word communicates reconciliation, like justification, is a present reality for Christians and is something to rejoice over. Therefore, reconciliation expresses the remaking of relationship initiated by God with humans, and later humans with God and man with man.

## Reconciliation in the Old Testament

An Old Testament concept related reconciliation is that of atonement, “to become acceptable”, or “to cover” (1 Samuel 29:4). This is the closest single use of the Hebrew word that is translated as “reconciliation.” The Septuagint also employs reconciliation language on occasion for the resolution of conflict between individuals (Jeremiah 31:39).<sup>32</sup> The problem of a broken relationship between God and humanity raises the need for reconciliation. This is closely related to the need for forgiveness. Forgiveness usually leads to reconciliation. The Bible describes sin in many ways, for example, transgressing the divine command, breaking the covenant, missing the mark, and falling away from God. All this is believed to have brought about a guilt and alienation that must be covered or removed if fellowship is to be restored. It is important to note that the initiative in this removal and restoration belongs to God, and that humanity is the object of reconciliation. This is because God has not done anything wrong to be reconciled to man. Instead, those who have revolted against God and who are therefore responsible for their hostility and estrangement must be reconciled to him. God, in his persistent grace, sets aside the cause of alienation and makes provision for forgiveness of the offence, thereby winning the grateful love of those who have broken the relationship, and enables sinners who were at odds with him to become “at one” with him again.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Das, “Reconciliation,” 747.

<sup>33</sup> G. W. Bromiley, “Reconcile,” *ISBE*, vol 4 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988), 55.

## Reconciliation in the New Testament

Three times in the New Testament reconciliation refers to interpersonal relations. In Matthew 5:24, "Leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift." This indicates that reconciliation must take place between community members before bringing an offering to God. Andrew Das suggests that the passive form of the verb expresses the same notion as the active form, which is that an individual must take the necessary action to persuade a community member to be restored to friendly relations.<sup>34</sup> In the New Testament, God reconciles the world to himself (2 Corinthians 5:19). He loved us even while we were sinners, offering his Son so that we might be forgiven and saved from his wrath (Romans 5:8-10). Even when people remain adamant in sin, God does not change; he patiently leads and brings sinners to repentance, forgiveness and a life of reconciliation with him. The aim of reconciliation is to restore fellowship with God and to remove every obstacle. This Gospel of reconciliation has a double thrust. First, God has already made reconciliation possible for us (2 Corinthians 5:18). Second, as we receive this message and respond to it, we are reconciled to God (2 Corinthians 5:20). This implies that at both ends, it is all about what God has done for us through Christ.

## Conclusion

This present study aims at providing an aspect of responding to violence unleashed on Christians in Jos. It has been said that it is believed that the outcomes of

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<sup>34</sup> Das, "Reconciliation," 746.



this thesis can be needful and beneficial to places going through similar conflict. This is because the basis for this work is biblically and theologically based. The concepts that come to mind as we attempt to put forward a biblical-theological basis for the work are as follows; violence, repentance, forgiveness and reconciliation. All of them are put forward as a prerequisite to one another as the work progresses.

Violence, as already stated, is a behavior involving physical force intended to hurt, damage, or kill. It could also be strength of emotion or an unpleasant or destructive force.<sup>35</sup> It could be a natural force, passion, and intensity.<sup>36</sup> It may be the exertion of physical force to injure or abuse, as in warfare effecting illegal entry into a house. It is also injury by, or as if by, distortion, infringement, or profanation.<sup>37</sup> Violence therefore is a result of the falling sinful state of man. It is the distortion of the harmonious state of God's creation. The story of Cain and Abel provides the background for the coming of violence into the world. Genesis 4:8, "Now Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let's go out to the field." And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him." The Old Testament sees violence as the willful destructive activities of men. This first act of violence is the murder of a brother, a good man with whom God was pleased with his sacrifice. The act was carried out through a deliberate deceit to illustrate the awful consequences of the Fall. From this initial willful destructive activity of man, it became evident that man is no longer able to control violence. In Genesis 6:11, "Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight and was full of

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<sup>35</sup> *The Reader's Digest Word Power Dictionary*, s.v. "violence."

<sup>36</sup> *Queen's English Dictionary and Thesaurus of the English Language*, s.v. "violence."

<sup>37</sup> *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary and Thesaurus in Encyclopedia Britannica*, s.v. "violence."

violence.” God could no longer contain with man’s activities, so he brought the flood. The psalmist concurs when he states that, as the flood came upon a violent generation, so will destruction befall all who are violent (Psalm 140:11). Acts of violence fills the story of the life of the Israelites. In times of sin, God departs from them and allows pagan nations around them to unleash violence on them. This shows that the message of the Old and New Testaments are consistent on the subject of violence. Jesus summarizes the message in Matthew 5:5: “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.”

Therefore, violence as a single concept in the OT portrays a willful and sinful act of aggression by people against people. However, in the NT, the first understanding of the concept is related even to natural happenings that may not intentionally be meant for evil. The second understanding in both the Gospels and the epistles shows that violence is described as a disposition to inflict harm to gain one’s way. Ultimately, as the Bible promises in both the OT and the NT, the wicked, violent and evil will be judged. But the meek, gentle and righteous will be vindicated. The biblical-theological foundation of this present study is based on this understanding. Violence gives birth to violence. The fact that violence has become part of the human experience through history is not enough reason to allow it continue. This evil act can be corrected, as it will be illustrated in the next chapter.

In the first section of this study, it was established that there are emerging changing patterns of response to the violence unleashed on the church from within the church. Some of these emerging changes include the compartmentalization of the

places of residence in Jos and its environs, the use of sophisticated weapons amongst both sides of the divide, the resurgence of fetishism among members of the church, and traces of cannibalism among some Christian youths.

One major shift witnessed after the 2001 conflict is the compartmentalization of the communities in Jos, with Muslims living in some areas of the city while Christians live in other parts of the city. Places like Angwan Rogo, Dilime, Bauchi Road, and parts of Nasarawa are inhabited by Muslims. Places like Jenta Apata, Laranto, Gada Biyu, Tudun Wada and Angwan Rukuba are reserved for Christians.

This compartmentalization of the adherents of the two faith communities gave room for hatred, suspicion and animosity. A level of destruction, such as that witnessed in 2001, and the complexity of the use of ammunitions in the conflict, both increased in the subsequent conflict. Sophisticated arms were employed. The polarization currently being witnessed, even among the security agencies expected to bring succor to the victims of the crisis, was not recorded during the 2001 conflicts.

Reported sporadic attacks became the order of the day from one village to the next within Plateau State, while the September 7, 2001, conflict was mainly within the city of Jos. These later attacks cut across the entire State with numerous losses in human lives and properties. These are some of the catalogued conflicts recorded in Plateau State since the September 2001 crisis in Jos. The compartmentalization of places of residence demonstrates that people have not repented, let alone forgiven those that have hurt them. This attitude of no repentance and forgiveness has become more glaring since the early days of the conflict. Pastors and leaders encouraged members to

forgive and practice the way taught by Jesus Christ as contained in the Bible. But major changes have been recorded, issues of the third cheek (of which there is no third cheek to offer), came about and “the theology of the wall” was created to help such people respond to the violence unleashed on them. The theology of the wall speaks of a pushing of Christians to the wall; therefore, they need to push back and respond violently. Responding to the violence was at different levels, ranging from self-defense to actively going out to attack those on the other side.

Some people from within the church have gone out to try fetish means of attaining protection to fight and defend themselves. This action carries with it a lot of implications. The African Traditional Religion provided the grounds for that to be actualized. Additionally, there have been reports of some cannibalism in the course of responding to the conflicts. This is also from within the church. This emerging change in response to the conflicts is only recorded in the 2010 and the 2011 crises. In the last two major crises, it is also reported that some of the people involved in the killings have moved from killing and burning the corpses to eating them.<sup>39</sup> The act of a person eating the flesh of other human beings, otherwise known as cannibalism, even though not entirely a new thing among some African tribes in the past, is a very worrying thing happening in this day and age. Most worrying is that it is done by people who claim to be fighting for God, or in the name of God. Sadly, this is now a reality on the Jos Plateau as people seek to respond to the incessant conflict that has engulfed the “Tin City.” Whatever the cause for this shift is, it is unacceptable and needs to be addressed by all.

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<sup>39</sup> Joseph Dalyop, interview by author, July 12, 2011. Rev. Joseph Dalyop was an eyewitness to this renewed cannibalism during the January, 2010 crisis at Angwan Rukuba, Jos, Central Nigeria.

What is the implication on the message of the Gospel? Closely related to this change in attitude is a situation in which some “Christians” practice syncretism by the use of charms and amulets as their source of power and for protection from any danger. This has been reported in many instances in the conflicts around Jos and in other conflicts within the middle belt Central Nigeria.<sup>40</sup> This is all in an attempt to carry out vengeance and to pay back evil for evil.

As we have seen, repentance and forgiveness are rooted in the character of God. In both the Old and New Testaments, it has been established that man is in need of God because of his sinfulness. Man must have an intense feeling of remorse over things done wrongly or things that are not done but are suppose to have been done. To remain with an anger that permeates the hearts of Christians in Jos, to refuse to repent to God and the group on the other side, and to refuse to forgive will be a poor grasp of the message of the Gospel with dire consequences. Let me say emphatically, that there is so much of the Gospel that Christians in Jos and all those who respond with such a poor understanding of the Gospel need to relearn.

Last, it ends with a look at the word reconciliation. It states that reconciliation indicates a change in social relationship in which two or more parties, previously at enmity with each other, exchange friendship and peace. God’s reconciliation with man is the basis for all reconciliation that affects man. The Bible states clearly that

All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message

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<sup>40</sup> Christopher Luka, “The Effects of Religious Conflicts on COCIN RCC Tafawa Balewa” (bachelor’s thesis, Gindiri Theological Seminary, May 2010), 36.

of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God (2 Corinthians 5:18-20).

Until Christians in Jos, and elsewhere, see to the fact that, "We were once estranged and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, but only reconciled in the death of Christ, so as to present us holy, blameless and irreproachable before him" (Colossians 1:21-22), truly, there is no need for accusation on anyone's part.

## CHAPTER THREE

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Introduction

This present study attempts to survey how Christians facing violence should react to their circumstances. Issues relating to violence unleashed on Christians are by no means new phenomena. Historically, the church has experienced many forms of violence. The volume of literature on the subject is expansive. Due to the nature of this research that aims at looking at practical issues related to the subject, related literature that will be reviewed will be from secondary sources with a few consultations on the primary sources. This approach, I believe, will not only guide the content of this present study to practical issues and current realities on the subject, but will also be meaningful in fulfilling the aims of the study. However, the secondary sources that are consulted are based on primary sources.

#### Beginnings

A good approach to understanding the issues of conflict and violence in the Bible is to start with seeing its root in the story of Adam and Eve with a conflict about who was responsible for eating the forbidden fruit. Adam began the war between the sexes by blaming Eve rather than taking responsibility for his own action.<sup>1</sup> This sets the tone from the episode between Cain and his brother Abel running throughout the history of

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<sup>1</sup> Daniel L. Buttry, *Christian Peacemaking* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1994), 28.

the children of Israel and the intertestamental period. But before this sad episode of the expression of violence in creation, God had created a world that was in unity with itself because after all his creative work God said, "It was good" (Genesis 1:31). It is believed that early Christian sources reveal that Christianity started in an obscure and insignificant way within the borders of the Roman Empire. From the capital of Judaism to the capital of the heathens with a phenomenal growth from a small persecuted minority to between ten to twelve million by the fourth century.<sup>2</sup> After the crucifixion of Jesus, his followers in Judea and Galilee, led by the apostles, continued as an identifiable group.<sup>3</sup> All these followers were, by definition, Jews by birth. About the Jewish Christians of Galilee almost nothing is known of them.

In the picture provided of the Jerusalem Church in the New Testament, they appear as one Jewish group among many, living for the most part in peace, participating in the temple rituals, and keeping the Torah in their fashion while awaiting the second coming of Jesus as Christ and with it the end of the present age.<sup>4</sup> This is the picture painted in Acts of the Apostles. Jewish Christians lived as an ideal community, sharing all in common (Acts 2:46; 4:32, 34). These attitudes of the early Jewish Christians can only be known through these records in Acts. This is because nothing that has been written by them survived. But the close affinity of these believing Jews with the synagogue and

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<sup>2</sup> Kiamu Nuwoe-James, "The Mind of Christ: A Paradigm Toward a Biblical Theology of Transformational and Proactive Responses to Violence" (A PhD Dissertation submitted to the University of Jos, Nigeria), 29.

<sup>3</sup> Adrian Hastings, ed., *A World History of Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 17.

<sup>4</sup> Hastings, *World History of Christianity*, 17.



the Torah may have been the reason why a certain amount of peace and understanding kept the new community with its host: The Judaizers.

It is believed that Christians were thrown out of Jewish synagogues, not because of their behaviors, but because of their theological claims about Jesus. According to Acts 6:13-14, it was for his theological assertions about the temple and the Torah that Stephen was accused, and eventually stoned to death by a mob in Jerusalem.

### **Violence Unleashed On The Church**

In a way, the Jewish persecution of the early church was less than the Roman persecution of the church. This is because of the attitude of the early Christians to the synagogue and the use of the Torah. This calm relationship lasted for a long time, but the growing number of this new sect and their determination became a matter of concern. Vivian Green states that,

The Jews became hostile, particularly at festival times, as that of Purim, burning Christian crosses, attacking Christian belief such as that of Resurrection which they termed sorcery and actively supporting persecution ...where there was persecution it tended to be sporadic, local in its range, representing the pressure of public opinion rather than government policy.<sup>5</sup>

The conflict became sharper, in the case of Judaism, because the Christians added the Jewish formulation to their creed on their own, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one Lord." The Christian confession added that, "Christ is Lord."<sup>6</sup> The claims of Christianity as a religion that has come from within Judaism, but different in its

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<sup>5</sup> Vivian Green, *A New History of Christianity* (New York, NY: Continuum Publishing, 1996), 17.

<sup>6</sup> Roland H. Bainton, *Early Christianity* (New York, NY: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1960), 23.

interpretations of part of Jewish understanding of God, became the reason for the growth of the conflict between Christianity and Judaism in those early days.

The first violent persecution against Christians took place in Rome in 64AD at the orders of the Emperor Nero. This is when Christians were made the scapegoat for the terrible fires which swept the city on July 19, which some attributed to Emperor Nero himself. This assertion maintains that Nero was eager to clear a site for a new palace, so he set the place on fire, but falsely accused Christians for the act. Green reported that consequently, Tacitus wrote,

To get rid of the report Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace...Accordingly an arrest was first made on all who confessed; then upon their information, an immense multitude was convicted not so much for the crime of arson, as of hatred of the human race. Covered with the skins of beasts, they were torn by dogs and perished, or were nailed to crosses, or were doomed to the flames.<sup>7</sup>

These brought forth the description of the events leading to the open persecution and torture of Christians introduced by the Roman authorities. The nature and the statures of Christianity within the Roman Empire is one reason why the persecution was fierce. The Jews insisted that Christianity was not Judaism. But Christians themselves were equally emphatic that their religion was the true Judaism, and that they preached nothing which had not been foretold by Moses and the Prophets.<sup>8</sup> Christianity came under intense rejection not only from Jews, but also from

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<sup>7</sup> Green, *New History of Christianity*, 17.

<sup>8</sup> Bainton, *Early Christianity*, 21.

pagans because the Christians were even more aggressive than the Jews in their attacks on the idolatry of the day.

In addition to the reasons mentioned, even though it is similar in nature, Judaism had a place under the Roman authorities that Christianity did not. Judaism was a “tolerated religion.” If Judaism was recognized and Christianity was not under Judaism, then Christianity was not recognized, and thereby subject to police pressure and persecution.<sup>9</sup> If Christianity was a form of Judaism, it would have enjoyed a like exemption; but if it was a new religion, then death was the penalty for refusal to comply with the demands of the Roman rulers.

However, it became clear that by the end of the first century, this was the grounds for which Christians were persecuted. It is reported by a letter of Pliny the Proconsul in Bithynia to the Emperor Trajan around the year 112 as quoted by Bainton, (See Document No. 1, 11.), “Pliny’s letter makes it plain that the sole offense for which the Christians were put to death was their refusal to worship the emperor.”<sup>10</sup>

However, Christians understood those persecutions as martyrdom. Literally, the word martyr is from the Greek *martus* which means “witness.” The Christian sense of the term originally applied to those apostles who were eyewitnesses to the life and death of Christ.<sup>11</sup> But as the church underwent persecution by the Roman authorities, the term was applied to those who witnessed for their faith by undergoing suffering and

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<sup>9</sup> Bainton, *Early Christianity*, 21.

<sup>10</sup> Bainton, *Early Christianity*, 21.

<sup>11</sup> Goring, *Dictionary of Beliefs*, 326.

even death. This same concept has come to be used by other world religions, such as Islam, Buddhism, Judaism and others.

It is worthy of note, that such persecution and testing has often produced a more active and committed Christian community, bearing Tertullian's famous observation that "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church."<sup>12</sup> This truth is supported in many cases in the experience of the church. Another aspect of martyrdom includes those periods when church and state have worked together, and dominant Christian communities have persecuted or oppressed minority Christian (or other, particularly Jewish) groups. For example, during the Crusades, Christianity attacked Islam, and a battle was waged between the Western (Latin) and Eastern (Greek) churches. Such persecutions were undertaken for both political and religious reasons. It was to achieve and maintain stability and to punish so-called heretics and schismatics for the good of their souls and as a warning to others.<sup>13</sup> This later experience of persecution did not occur at the same time as the Roman persecutions. Still, it is meaningful to know that other experiences of persecution have taken place in the life of the church.

The experience of the church in this case can be summarized in the thoughts of Tertullian who states that, "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church." It has also been established that "the persecution in the first three centuries was a "bloody

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<sup>12</sup> Goring, *Dictionary of Beliefs*, 326.

<sup>13</sup> Goring, *Dictionary of Beliefs*, 326.

baptism for the church” that “resulted in the birth of a Christian world.”<sup>14</sup> This experience gave an outstanding explosion after this period that gave birth to a Christian world.

### **The Nature of the Early Internal Persecution**

The nature of these early internal persecutions is key to understanding the response of the church. While the church faces persecution from without, it was sad that it did not just stop at that. Disagreement on issues relating to the faith also brought about a new wave of persecution from within. Nuwoe-James states that, “the Ebionites, Nazarenes and Elkesaites, all showing strong tendencies toward Judaism, and Gentile Christian Gnosticism persecuted the Church.”<sup>15</sup> The Ebionites (literary means “poor men”) are a Judeo-Christian sect of the early Christian period; they were opposed by Irenaeus in the late second century. They were apparently ascetic, and continued to rigorously observe the Jewish Law. They also believed that Jesus was the Messiah, a virtuous man anointed by the Spirit, but not truly “divine.”<sup>16</sup> Such was the nature of the disagreements from within that resulted in the different faces of persecution meted on the Church.

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<sup>14</sup> Nuwoe-James, “The Mind of Christ,” 31.

<sup>15</sup> Nuwoe-James, “The Mind of Christ,” 32.

<sup>16</sup> Goring, *Dictionary of Belief*, 154.

The literature of the period showed that Christianity responded with nonviolence, submission to persecution and martyrdom, defense of the faith, Christian teaching of the truth, and an engagement in seeking justice.<sup>17</sup>

### **Three Basic Attitudes in Christian History on Violence**

The church was birthed out of Judaism, and early on it struggled with its identity. The identity struggle was not a challenge to the followers of Christ as much as it was to others who were not part of the new community. The Disciples, at least, had an understanding of who they were in Christ (Acts 1:8). The unleashing of violence on the church forced it to respond. Supporting the notion that Jesus bequeathed his followers a legacy of opposition to violence and warfare, is the fact that of the three basic positions on war and violence that emerged in Christian history, the first was an unequivocal pacifism. The early Christians took seriously the injunction that they were not to take up the sword and to even refuse to serve in the Roman armies to avert being part of violence.<sup>18</sup>

The second position came to be called the Doctrine of the Just War. With the threatening of the stability of the Roman Empire by the invasion of the Barbarians from the north, Christians began to argue that there might be times when they could be justified in waging war, if certain specified criteria were met. A third position that emerged later was the theory of the holy war or crusades. This involved an acceptance

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<sup>17</sup> Nuwoe-James, "The Mind of Christ," 32.

<sup>18</sup> Robert M. Brown, *Religion and Violence*, (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1987), 18.

of whatever kind of force or violence was necessary to secure a given end, and the unquestioning participation of the Christian on the assumption that God's will was being saved.<sup>19</sup> These three positions will now be reviewed in detailed.

### Nonviolence/Pacifism

The pacifist refers to someone who refuses to participate in violence, including service in the military, to avert the use of violence of any kind. In this present study, the word will be used interchangeably with the concept of nonviolence. Nonviolence is the practice of being harmless to self and others under every condition. It comes from the belief that you do not have to hurt people, animals, or the environment to get what you want. Athenagoras, Tertullian, and Origen defended nonviolence. Tertullian stressed prayers for the state and the emperor as the biblical Christian duty and response because Jesus disarmed Peter.<sup>21</sup> The starting point for Christian ethics is Jesus Christ, both in his person and in his teaching. The book of Hebrews says, "Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son" (Hebrews 1:1-2). Jesus is the climax of biblical revelation, so rather than accepting the violence in the Old Testament as an ethical basis for living, and then trying to squeeze Jesus' teaching into that framework, we must begin with an understanding of what Jesus was saying and work our way into the rest of the Bible with

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<sup>19</sup> Brown, *Religion and Violence*, 18.

<sup>21</sup> Nuwoe-James, "The Mind of Christ," 36.

a Christ-centered conceptual framework.<sup>22</sup> Origen held to the image of God in humanity, *imago-dei*, as the reason for shunning violence. He maintained that Christ did not teach violence to his followers and their existence did not originate in rebellion. Therefore, violence was not a Christian trait.<sup>23</sup> In his submission, Origen states that the image of God provided the bond that made hatred and enmity evil. He insisted that God gave love to humanity as a means to preserve the species. This is because kindness bears love, and love for the other will not permit one to offer harm; violence was not Christian.<sup>24</sup> Issues in life can be expressed violently or nonviolently. This strategy has been used in history politically.

People can bring about change or resist oppression by doing things not expected of them, or by not doing the things expected of them, yet without inflicting injury (violence) on those they are resisting.<sup>25</sup> Friesen states that under a variety of political systems throughout history people have waged this kind of power to achieve change and resist oppression without the use of violence. Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King are probably the best-known examples of people who have used this concept to achieve political gains in the past few decades.<sup>26</sup> A civil action can be employed in addressing the conflict that has consumed Jos. A civil action is an action that is

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<sup>22</sup> Buttry, *Christian Peacemaking*, 8.

<sup>23</sup> Nuwoe-James, "The Mind of Christ," 36.

<sup>24</sup> Nuwoe-James, "The Mind of Christ," 36.

<sup>25</sup> Duane K. Friesen, *Christian Peacemaking and International Conflict* (Oxford, UK: OUP, 1970), 149.

<sup>26</sup> Terrence J. Rynne, *Gandhi & Jesus: The Saving Power of Nonviolence*, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2008); The legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is held in high regards in America and the world over for struggles against racial segregation.



nonviolent in approach to oppression against a people. In this case, like-minded people from both sides of the divide, both Christians and Muslims in Jos, can create a common front to say no the use of violence to settle issues.

### Violence and the Just War Theory

The “Just war theory/tradition” is one of the three basic attitudes in Christian history on violence. This position was developed by St. Augustine, given careful treatment by St. Thomas Aquinas in the medieval period, and further refined by the Jesuit theologian Suarez during the Counter-Reformation.<sup>27</sup> Augustine justified war as necessary for peace, provided it met his three critical factors: the act, agent, and author for the action. He contended that an act has merit or demerit depending on the authority behind it. The criteria of just cause (*jus ad bellum*) and just means (*jus in bello*) have produced a representative list of rules to govern the just war.<sup>28</sup> These rules will be discussed later.

Perhaps, the majority Christian view on the use of violence is something closer to saying that the use of force is always wrong, unless it is more wrong *not* to. There is nothing more serious in our relations with those around us than the threat of taking the life of another human being created like you and me in the image of God.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Robert McAfee Brown, *Religion and Violence*, (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1987), 19.

<sup>28</sup> Nuwoe-James, “The Mind of Christ,” 35.

<sup>29</sup> John Stott, *Issues Facing Christians Today: New Perspectives on Social and Moral Dilemmas* (London, UK: Harper Collins, 1990), 85.

There are many biblical passages, which on their own would lead to a thoroughgoing “pacifist” conclusion, e.g. Exodus 20:13, Matthew 5:38-48 and Romans 12:9-20. But, we need to see the other side of the coin as we attempt to hold the love, mercy and compassion of God’s character as reflected here with his holiness, righteousness and justice.<sup>30</sup>

In Matthew 6:33, we are exhorted to, “Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness” – you cannot have one (his kingdom) without the other (his righteousness). Paul, similarly, in Romans 14:17, links the two: “The kingdom of God is...about...righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”<sup>31</sup>

In Romans 13, Paul explains how the Lord’s justice is achieved through government (v. 1b, v. 4). As we begin to put these together, we can see that in some circumstances force may sometimes be used, but not for personal/individual reasons, and not for revenge and the like. This right to rule is not rooted in the consent of the governed, but derives from God (Daniel 5:21).<sup>32</sup>

Christians, in reflecting on the nature of the kingdom of God, have come to two divergent conclusions:

3. The “pacifist” view that, “The kingdom of God is here in its fullness and we can (and should) live as in the kingdom.” Stott states clearly that the Christian should not

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<sup>30</sup> Alan Chilver, “Is Violence Ever Legitimate” (lecture, Bukuru, Nigeria, October 2001), 11. This paper was written in the wake of the 2001 ethno-religious crisis in Jos Nigeria.

<sup>31</sup> Chilver, “Is Violence Ever Legitimate,” 12.

<sup>32</sup> Yusufu Turaki, “Church and the State,” 1371.

Resist an evil person as the command of Christ. Instead, if he strikes us on the right cheek, we are to turn to him the other also. We are to love our enemies, do good to those who hate us and pray for those who persecute us. Only so can we qualify as children of our Heavenly Father, for his love is indiscriminate, and he gives the blessings of rain and sunshine to the evil and the good alike. To hate those who love us is the devil's way. To love those who love us and hate those who hate us is the way of the world. But if we would follow Jesus, however, and accept the standards of his Kingdom, we must love those who hate us (Matthew 5:38-48; Luke 6:27-36).<sup>33</sup>

Jesus did not just teach this view, he practiced it. In this view, the teaching of Jesus points the church to the way of non-resistance and non-violence. Christians, who hold to this total pacifist position call it the Way of the Cross, "Take up your cross and follow me daily."

4. The view which says; "We must recognize that Christians have to live in a world touched by sin, in which violence is inevitable, and which they have to hold in tension with a moral view of eschatological perfection." This is the "Just War" tradition.<sup>34</sup>

Earlier we referred to "the majority Christian view" which holds that the use of force lies within the "permissive will" of God for our lives in a fallen world. While it is important to respect and be challenged by the pacifist view, many would not take it as the way a responsible Christian society should go about, facing the challenge of violence forced on her. The pacifist understanding acts as an important deterrent, and helps those Christians who hold an alternative view to develop proper criteria for, and to set important limitations on, the use of force.

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<sup>33</sup> Stott, *Issues*, 87.

<sup>34</sup> Chilver, "Is Violence Ever Legitimate," 12.

Chilver referred to the following criteria and principles for the use of violence which have been developed over the years, no one of which on its own is adequate justification: all must be taken into account together:

1. Just Cause: the only just cause for the use of violence is defense against violent (and unjustified) aggression against a person, or against a neighbor unable to defend him/herself.
2. Just Intention: the only just intention is to restore peace to friend or foe. There must be no motive for revenge or retribution. Just intention demands also proper conduct, avoiding any tendency toward hatred or brutality.
3. Last Resort: the use of force must be a last resort after every other effort to resolve the situation has been exhausted and failed.
4. Proper Authority: the decision to resort to violence must be made by a lawful authority, and should be marked by an official declaration.
5. Limited Ends: the use of violence must be for limited ends only - sufficient to repel aggression and to redress injustice.
6. Proportionality: the means of violence used must be proportional to the offence, and necessary to achieve the end intended.
7. Reasonable Chance of Success: if a just settlement cannot be achieved, the additional suffering caused by violence would serve no purpose; so violence must only be used where there is a reasonable chance of success, and must be discontinued if that chance fades.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Chilver, "Is Violence Ever Legitimate," 11.

The events of the ethno-religious disturbances in Jos, and any future developments, need to be judged against these principles.

### The Holy War or Crusade

This position was developed later in the history of the church. The Pope authorized Holy Wars in defense of Christendom and the Church. They were fought against the infidels in the East, and in Germany and Spain against heretics and schismatics who threatened Catholic unity, and against Christian laypowers who opposed the papacy.<sup>36</sup> The crusades represent the medieval chapter in the long story of interaction between East and West. The Trojan and Persian wars of antiquity were the prelude, and the imperialist expansion of the modern Western Europe was the latest version of this event: the Crusades.<sup>37</sup> But more specifically, the Crusades represent the reaction of Christian Europe against Muslim Asia, which had been on the offensive since 632 after the takeover of the leadership of the Islamic *Ummah* by the institution of the *Khalifah*.<sup>38</sup> The *Khalifah* is the office of a viceroy after Prophet Muhammad as the leader of the Islamic community – *Ummah*.

This reaction by the church to violence is seldom practiced by responsible church leaders, today. And since those early practices of it, it has remained relatively out of place. That notwithstanding, it has been a silent part of the experience of the church. It

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<sup>36</sup> Goring, *Dictionary of Belief*, 126.

<sup>37</sup> Philip K. Hitti, *The Arabs: A Short History* (Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, 1996), 219.

<sup>38</sup> The institution of the Khalifah came about after the demise Prophet Muhammad, with four people designated as the "Rightly Guided Caliphs" – Abu Bakr, Umar Ibn al-Khattab, Uthman Ibn Affan and Ali Ibn Abu Tallib. It started in 632 and ended in 661.

has echoed in the public rhetoric of politicians. Robert, states that Mr. Nixon's reference to America's presence in Vietnam as one of our shining hours being only a single case in point.<sup>39</sup> A close look at the Crusades at this point will not be out of order.

The name Crusade given to the Holy Wars came from old French word *crois* meaning "cross." These are some of the reasons that necessitated the campaigns. One, it was a reaction of the Christian Europe against Muslim Asia. The campaigns of the Arabs under the banner of Islam was not only in Syria, but also in Spain and Sicily. Two, the fact that it looked like the Arab move had the potential of moving even further was another great concern. The migratory and military tendencies of the Arabs who had changed the map of Europe was one reason to take that position. Three, the destruction by a Fatimid caliph in 1009 of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre which was an object of pilgrimage for thousands of Europeans was the third reason for taking the out the crusades. Four, pilgrims coming through Asia Minor were subjected to untold hardship at different levels by the Arabs. Last, the immediate cause of the Crusades was the repeated appeal made in 1095 to Pope Urban II by the byzantine Emperor Alexius Comnenus, whose possessions and place in parts of Asia had been overrun by the Saljuqs as far as the shores of Marmora. The threats of the Muslims were extended to Constantinople itself. The Pope had also observed that the action had the potential of reuniting the Greek Church with Rome. This possibility made him go all out for it.<sup>40</sup>

There were a total of nine crusades all from 1095- 1291. The first four were seen as the

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<sup>39</sup> Brown, *Religion and Violence*, 19.

<sup>40</sup> Hitti, *The Arabs*, 220-21.

most important, and scant references are made to the other crusades, with the exception of the Children's crusade that effectively led to the decline of the crusades. For a period of two hundred years, Europe and Asia were engaged in almost constant warfare. Throughout this period, there was a continuous movement of crusaders to and from the Moslem possessions in Asia Minor, Syria, and Egypt.<sup>41</sup>

### **Violence And The African Worldview**

Nuwoe-James introduces the subject of violence and the African worldview with a question: How do Africans understand and respond to violence from their worldviews and experience? In his attempt to answer that question, he looks at the observation of Donald Wright in his book, *African-Americans in the Colonial Era*, by saying that institutional slavery in pre-colonial Africa promoted violence. Wright states that,

African societies obtained slaves by more or less violent means. Warfare – including raids, banditry, and kidnapping was the most common method. Even wars not fought to gain slaves often had that effect, for prisoners of war were usually enslaved and sold or put to work to help defray the costs of the wars. If ransom was impossible, there were other considerations. Young boys could train as future soldiers; girls and women could become concubines; slaves of either sex could be given as gifts to religious persons or shrines.<sup>42</sup>

While these observations have value in themselves, the observation is a product of the antecedents of the African people. The encounter of the Africans with the phenomena of slavery and the treatment of fellow Africans is not enough to assert and understand the issue of violence among Africans. For a more valued understanding of

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<sup>41</sup> Norman Housley, *Fighting for the Cross: Crusading to the Holy Land* (New Haven, NJ: Yale University, 2008), 1.

<sup>42</sup> Nuwoe-James, "The Mind of Christ," in Donald R. Wright, *African American in the Colonial Era: From African Origins Through the American Revolution* (1990), 37.

violence in the African worldview, it is appropriate to refer to their understanding of the concept of evil and its origins in the African thought.

John Mbiti, in looking at the concepts of evil, ethics and justice, states that African people are keenly aware of evil in the world, and in various ways they endeavor to fight it.<sup>43</sup> Violence and evil was, and still is, part of the evil in our world that Africans and others seek to fight. Mbiti traces the understanding of the African people about evil as a categorical rejection of God as the creator of evil, and that God does not do any evil to people. God is seen as good in the African worldview and stands against what is violent and evil. Some societies see evil as originating from, or associated with, spiritual beings other than God. It is believed that this evil divinity is assisted by evil spirits and all evil now comes from that lot.<sup>44</sup> Laurenti Magesa in his book, *African Religion: The Moral Traditions of Abundant Life*, observes on the moral universe by Africans that, "African Religions conception of morality is steeped in tradition; it comes from and flows from God into the ancestors of the people. God is seen as the Great Ancestor, the first Founder and Progenitor, the Giver of Life, the Power behind everything that is."<sup>45</sup>

Therefore, one of the main characteristics about humanity in Africa is their moral and spiritual obligation to live in harmony with the physical and spiritual world.<sup>46</sup> That obligation makes violence evil and unwelcome in African traditional life. The limitation

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<sup>43</sup> Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 204.

<sup>44</sup> Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 204.

<sup>45</sup> Laurenti Magesa, *African Religion: The Moral Traditions of Abundant Life* (New York, NY: Orbis, 1997), 35.

<sup>46</sup> Turaki, *Unique Christ*, 67, in Nuwoe-James, "The Mind of Christ," 37.



of Turaki's work was that he did not show how African worldviews respond to this unwelcome phenomenon: violence.

The events of the Uthman Dan-Fodio's jihad in northern Nigeria and the subjugation of indigenous African communities with the swords of the jihadist is another picture of the Africans' experience with violence. John Azumah's book, *The Legacy of Arab-Islam in Africa*, expresses the unleashing of violence on indigenous African communities by the jihadist that reveal another aspect of violence in Africa.

Research has shown that perceptions of the Jihad movement in the minds of the people that made up the area affected by the activities of the Jihadist still controls and builds current tensions and crises.<sup>47</sup> "Conquered by the Sword" reported the impact of Islam since the 11<sup>th</sup> century in Borno, and Yobe States reveals that the Islamization of conquered people promoted violence among Africans.<sup>48</sup> Nuwoe-James discussed the Chamba of Taraba and Adamawa states in Nigeria who were forced to become Muslims during the 19<sup>th</sup> century Islamic Jihad of Uthman Dan-Fodio in northern Nigeria.

Conversion to Christianity attracts severe persecution, although it was reported that Islam enticed pastors with gifts of "money" and "women."<sup>49</sup> In the Tafawa Balewa areas of Bauchi state, Nigeria, while the reports of enticement were also recorded, most of the conversion to Islam was by force.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Dachomo, "Muslims and Christians Perceptions," 60.

<sup>48</sup> Nuwoe-James, "The Mind of Christ," 38.

<sup>49</sup> Nuwoe-James, "The Mind of Christ," 38.

<sup>50</sup> Dachomo, "Muslims and Christians Perceptions," 87.

Ethnicity is one area that has brought about the issues of violence in Africa on a large scale. It has been identified in the list of types of crises confronting the continent by Turaki in the list of conflicts in Africa. They include a catalogue of conflicts in Africa that reflect the political state of affairs of each of the African countries mentioned, noting that what really lay beneath were ethnic, racial, tribal and cultural tensions and conflicts all of which abound after political independence from the colonial forces.

“Sudan (Race and Religion); Ethiopia (Ethnic); the Congo crisis (Ethnic); South Africa (Race and Politics); Nigeria (Ethnic); Angola (Ethnic); Mozambique (Ethnic); Zimbabwe (Race and Politics); Namibia (Race and Politics); Morocco (Ethnic); Senegal (Ethnic); Uganda (Ethnic); Liberia (Ethnic); and Sierra Leone (Ethnic).”<sup>51</sup> Out of the thirteen African countries facing crises on Turaki’s list, nine of the conflicts are rooted in issues of ethnicity. This is also rooted in tribalism, which has defined another aspect of Africa on violence.

Elizabeth Isichei in her book, *The Religious Traditions of Africa: A History*, highlights another aspect of African worldview on violence. She discusses “Suffering and its Interpreters.” Isichei sees the problem of evil and conflicts in the African worldview as always identified with witchcraft. A “witch” or “sorcerer” is a concept in the cultures of many African people. The witch is often thought of as an older man or woman. Essentially, he or she is an astral cannibal who feeds on the acquired, or they become a witch because they are tricked into incurring a flesh debt. The witch is sometimes a shape-shifter or closely linked with an animal familiar. Isichei adds a dimension to this

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<sup>51</sup> Turaki, *Tribal Gods in Africa*, 5.

aspect of violence among the African people as she states that, whereas people eat animals and seek companionship from their own kind, witches eat people and prefer the companionship of other things. She outlines the images of the witch in culture spheres with two main tribes in Nigeria, one in southeastern Nigeria and the other in southwestern Nigeria. The Igbo's is a tribe in the southeastern part of Nigeria that typically sees the witch (*amosu*) as an older woman. Among the Igbo's witchcraft, accusations sometimes grew out of tensions in polygamous households, or were linked with anxieties and resentments sparked by the independence of women traders. This explanation in itself places the cultural sphere of the Igbo's on witchcraft as something that comes out of a feeling of insecurity from someone close so that he or she is labeled a witch. Similarly, among the Yoruba's of southwest Nigeria, the witch is always a woman. The word witch (*aje*) is avoided; they are referred to euphemistically as "Mothers (or Rulers) of the World." In the past, accusations of an individual were rare.<sup>52</sup>

However, for the Yoruba's, a woman could become a witch through an inheritance from her mother, through choice, or by inadvertently consuming human flesh, thus incurring debt that has to be repaid. But, in this case, as among the Igbo, witchcraft beliefs are often ascribed to tensions in polygamous households. In all the cases, witchcraft among African communities is viewed as a way of unleashing violence on a people rejected or unwanted by the witch

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<sup>52</sup> Elizabeth Isichei, *The Religious Traditions of Africa: A History* (London, UK: Praeger, 2004), 311.

## **Ideological Basis For The Use Of Violence In The Name Of Allah**

Terrorism stems out of an ideology that is strong and convincing to the terrorist, in many cases stronger than life itself. This gives rise to the conviction that a terrorist ought to even give his life for the course for which he is agitating. Usually, the ideology offers hope, a better life, and a future to its target, thereby making him vulnerable. Nothing would make a human being have explosives round him only to detonate them, killing himself and his targets, if not the hope of a hereafter. In most cases, the use of terror by one side of the divide is seen as a legitimate means of settling an injustice perceived by the one unleashing the terror. This is the reasoning behind the famous phrase that, “one man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter.” This is a legacy of legitimizing the use of terror by successive revolutionary movements. For the sake of this presentation I would concentrate on Islamic terrorism.

The use of terror by all terrorist movements that have roots in Islam is one that is profound. Some of the terrorist groups under the banner of Islam that we know today are as follows, Al-Qaida, Taliban, Al- Shabaab, Al-Badr, Ansar al-Islam, Ansar al-Sunna and Jama’atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad – popularly known as Boko haram. The English translation of the name of the Boko haram is a “People committed to the propagation of the teachings of the prophet and jihad.” All of those names mentioned are also committed to this same propagation of the teachings of the prophet Muhammad. In this case, the ideology is religious; it is Islam. The source of this teaching as an ideology is rooted in the understanding of what is Jihad? The word Jihad in Arabic means “struggle.” According to the Quran, Muslims have a duty to oppose those who

reject Islam, by armed struggle if necessary, and jihad has been invoked to justify both the expansion and defense of Islam.<sup>53</sup> M. Ali captures the root of this ideology in Islam in his book, *Islam Reviewed*. In defining the word Jihad, he states, “Jihad literary means ‘great striving’ and that striving includes a relentless and remorseless worldwide aggression. Jihad calls for armed struggle and battle, but also means a war through subversion and propaganda, through conversion of non-Muslims to Islam, and penetration of non-Muslim societies”.<sup>54</sup> After the Hijrah of the prophet from Mecca to Medina in 622AD, in his new role as the “Military General,” Muhammad commanded a band of Islamic Jihadist to ambush a defenseless Meccan caravan and seize their goods. This action of the unleashing of terror on harmless innocent Meccans needed some Qur’anic verses to support it. Qur’an surah Al Baqarah (2:216), says, “Fighting is prescribed upon you, and ye dislike it. But it is possible that ye dislike a thing which is good for you, and that ye love a thing which is bad for you. But Allah knoweth, and ye know not.” Ali asserts that, “The alluring benefit of material gains through the plunder, the unrestricted use of female captives, and an automatic admittance into paradise (to continue to enjoy virgins- my emphasis) proved too much temptation for the Muslims to resist”.<sup>55</sup> This scriptural injunction is still as tempting as it was in 7<sup>th</sup> century Arabia as it is today in 21<sup>st</sup> century Nigeria, America, Afghanistan, Somalia and elsewhere.

Oliver Mc Ternan in his book, *Violence in God’s Name: Religion in an Age of Conflict*, states this understanding with clarity as he addresses religious matters in

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<sup>53</sup> Goring, *Dictionary of Belief*, 263.

<sup>54</sup> Ali, *Islam Reviewed*, 66.

<sup>55</sup> Ali, *Islam Reviewed*, 67.

conflict. Ternan, says that on the hearing of a headline on violence relating to religion, people “either exaggerate religion’s role, denouncing it as the root cause of all conflict, or they deny that ‘real’ religion could be responsible in any way for indiscriminate violence.”<sup>56</sup> To agree with any of the two extremes without looking into the issues involved reveals an expression of naivety to the subject. But Ternan went ahead to relate what he was saying to the outcome of the attacks on America on September ninth twenty eleven. He said that a highly respected Jordanian journalist, Rami Khouri in a paper presentation at a seminar at Harvard in the week of the sad events, rationalizes for what happened in those attacks as simply “Arab Anger.” Khouri claimed that the terrorists were a fringe group who acted out of deep sense of frustration and anger that the whole Arab world feels at what they see as American arrogance, hypocrisy, self-interest and partiality in dealing with conflicts in the Middle East and elsewhere in the Muslim world. Khouri, like all other liberal commentators and religions leaders at that time, denounced the acts as to have any religious motive. He stated that it would be “immoral” to allege that these atrocities were motivated by religion. And, his analyses were endorsed by American Muslim leaders.<sup>57</sup> But, Ternan states that it is understandable to observe the eagerness of religious leaders to repudiate and disclaim atrocities committed by their co-religionist. This can easily be done by labeling the perpetrators as political criminals and people who have a distorted understanding of their religion. In some cases, they are called fanatics or unguided young men. This has

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<sup>56</sup> Oliver McTernan, *Violence in the Name of God*, (New York, NY: Orbis, 2003), 20.

<sup>57</sup> McTernan, *Violence in the Name*, 21.

been the case in many incidences in the conflicts in Jos and in Northern Nigeria. Those leaders do what they do to protect the sanctity of their religion and still make it salable. However, Ternan strongly states, "Reactions that either over exaggerate or underplay the role of religion in conflict fail to do justice to the complexity of faith-linked terrorism."<sup>58</sup> It is always helpful to study and understand the psychological and theological motivations of the actors in this business of killings in the name of God. I have already made submissions that the sacred books of Islam and its call to duty have made its unsuspecting targets vulnerable.

Ternan, observes that whatever their particular religious beliefs and customs, today's faith-inspired terrorists hold in common the belief that their scriptural or foundational texts were dictated verbatim by a divine authority, and as such are beyond interpretation. This understanding of scripture, and the approach to its content, can be misleading. The word as it is written must be obeyed. The documents found in luggage left behind at Boston's Logan Airport by Mohammed Atta, the alleged ringleader of the 9/11 hijackers, was useful information used by Ternan to assert that it was clearly revealed that the attackers were acting upon deeply held religious convictions, and that they regarded what they were doing as a sacred duty, aimed at giving glory to God. The content of one of the documents of Mohammad Atta as quoted by Ternan speaks for itself, it reads:

Tame your soul, purify it, convince it, make it understand, and incite it...bless your body with some verses of the Quran – this is done by rewarding verses into one's hands and then rubbing the hands over whatever is to be blessed – the luggage, clothes, the knife, your personal effects, your ID, your passport...the

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<sup>58</sup> McTernan, *Violence in the Name*, 21.

rest is left to god, the best one to depend on...we will all meet in the highest heaven, god willing.<sup>59</sup>

Islam has been described as a complete way of life with little or no demarcation between religion, politics, business, economy or even military. Muslims see their religion as embracing every aspect of life; therefore, they believe that individuals, societies and governments should all be obedient to the will of Allah as it is set forth in the Quran, which they regard as the Word of God.<sup>60</sup> Agitations for the full implementation of Sharia in governance are on the increase in Nigeria and in other countries of the world among diverse people and religions without recourse to the feelings of others who are not Muslim. This understanding agrees with Mohammad Atta's solemn call to tame the soul, purify and convince it to understand and get incited that the mission ahead is not just a disagreement with America's, arrogance, hypocrisy, self-interest and partiality in dealing with conflicts in the Middle East and elsewhere in the Muslim world, but that the action is a divine call sanctioned by the beloved Quran. During the bi-centenary celebrations of the Uthman Danfodio's jihad in 2004, a Nigerian Muslim made the following statements, saying, "The task ahead is to understand our reality, the Sokoto caliphate, define it, propagate it, and live by its teachings for the development and reinvigoration of the Islamic ideal, the restoration and uplifting of the

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<sup>59</sup> McTernan, *Violence in the Name*, in "Rage of Luton Muslims," *The Times*, 30 October 2001.

<sup>60</sup> Goring, *Dictionary of Belief*, 247.



teachings of Shehu Uthman Ibn Fodio, which has become a responsibility on our shoulders.”<sup>61</sup>

Such agitations tie in the perceptions and understanding of listeners an undeniable link between evil done in the name of a traditions highly respected by others to be its main task. This unusual nature of the all-inclusive nature of Islam has made it difficult to understand by those outside the faith.

The religious ideological basis for this present terrorism in Jos is still as it was in the past. From the passages of the Quran, backed by the Hadith and the writings of Islamic scholars, it reveals that Muhammad took up the sword only when told to do so by Allah. In a TV interview with one of the leaders of the Taliban in Afghanistan, the man insisted that the Taliban would win the war in Afghanistan because it is a war of ideology. The Americans and other NATO forces are counting their loses everyday in human lives and money spent, and they are afraid of death. But, the Taliban rejoice in dying for the course they are fighting. This is backed by the Quranic revelations and the Hadith that supports their actions as mentioned earlier.

I have admitted in the early part of this section that tendencies for these acts of terror are found in every religion and facet of life. There is no way to make a moral case for such activities, and they must be condemned out of hand as debased and inhuman. Communal pressures are needed to deter individuals and groups from such deeds, and

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<sup>61</sup> Muttaqa Yushau, “The Sokoto Caliphate: Beyond a Jamboree,” unpublished paper, May 2004, in Dachomo, “Muslim and Christian Perceptions,” 6.

there must be heavy punishment for those who persist in terrorist activity.<sup>63</sup> This pressure and punishment of the acts of terror must be seeing to coming from all who are true lovers of peace and the dignity of human beings. And for a more lasting solution it is to be denounced more by a tradition that such evil people are coming out of, this will build trust and confidence in future relations with others.

### **A Review Of The Proactive Non-Violent Response**

Nuwoe-James advocates for a “proactive non-violence response” on the issue of violence in our world today. He states that proactive non-violence, “Is not passivity, or aggression or even indifference. But that, it is the transforming power of the work of God through Christ that is at work in ordinary people to accomplish His will for all humanity, to liberate them from their culture of violence.”<sup>64</sup>

Buttry also sees this concept in the interpretation of Matthew 5:39, he said, “Jesus is calling his followers not to respond in kind to the acts of injustice and dehumanization directed against them, but rather to respond with transforming initiatives. He states that Walter Wink describes this approach as Jesus’ Third Way, one that stands in contrast to the ‘flight or fight’ responses so deeply conditioned in human beings.”<sup>65</sup> This proactiveness in dealing with conflicts not only controls the extent of damage brought about violence, but deals with it at its root. Only if those who advocate

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<sup>63</sup> Brown, *Religion and Violence*, xi.

<sup>64</sup> Nuwoe-James, “The Mind of Christ,” 291.

<sup>65</sup> Daniel L. Buttry, *Christian Peacemaking: From Heritages to Hope* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press), 15.

for peace will put the time and resources equal to that of those who advocate for violence put to making sure they achieve their devilish goals can the difference be seen. Nuwoe-James states that understanding the mind of Christ (and or in) the will of God is a starting point for a theology of violence. He states that how one interprets and uses the New Testament data on violence is significant in a New Testament theology of violence. The usage of the phrase “the mind of Christ and mind of the Lord” (1 Corinthians 2:16), is the source of his submission. It has a basic meaning of pointing or directing a person’s inner sense to an object. Four uses of the phrase include (1) as the faculty of intelligence, that is, understanding, mind, intellect (1 Corinthians 14:15); (2) as the faculty of moral perception: (practical) reason, insight, awareness (Romans 7:25); (3) as the total inner orientation or moral attitude: way of thinking, mind (set), disposition (Romans 1:28); and (4) as the result of mental activity: thought, judgment, resolve, opinion (Romans 14:5).<sup>66</sup> In this, Nuwoe-James, sees the mind of the Lord is further demonstrated by Christ’s life of obedience to His Father in every situation. To please his Father and do his good pleasure was Christ’s prime objective. This is the framework that made Christ stop at nothing that brought glory to God. Therefore, the mind of Christ is the framework within which God achieves his purpose for humanity. In other words, what would Christ do, say and so forth? The mind of Christ reflects the will of God. The call on all Christians is a call that should operate within this framework of the mind of Christ. May I quote the conclusions of Nuwoe-James on this matter:

The relationship between the two concepts (mind of Christ and will of God) is that the mind of Christ is deeply situated within the will of God and in fact, is the

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<sup>66</sup> Nuwoe-James, “The Mind of Christ,” 292.

most graphic exhibition of that will, with Calvary as its context. It is that will of God and the mind of Christ acting in harmony that constitute the content of the Gospel of the kingdom of God that Christ preached, taught, lived and continues to spread all over the world through His Holy Spirit and the Church. The will of God made Him to redeem humanity through the mind of Christ that would nothing else but the Father's will. His will does not wish that any should perish, but that all should come to repent; it wills that Christians live in the Spirit and walk in Christ's steps. It urges them to do the "abnormal" – loving, caring and praying for one's enemies. It forces the Christian to place a much higher value on the human being as a creature in God's image, one for whom God stopped at nothing to redeem.<sup>67</sup>

The call for the church in Jos is to grasp the truth in this concept as reveal in the Gospel.

### **Conclusion**

The bulk of literature on violence and the use of it in our world shows that there is no one generally accepted way on using or not using violence in the history of humanity. A look into the literature reveals that, while others accept and even justify the use of violence, still others reject it as evil and destructive, and it should not be condoned in any human society.

The body of literature reviewed in this present study has revealed clearly that violence has been a part of human experience right from the beginning of recorded history. The church was birthed in the mist of violence, beginning with the violent killing of the Lord. An act that was meant to be a violent end, God used to bring a glorious beginning of the faith. This was achieved through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is understood that because religion exercises tremendous influence on people and is a

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<sup>67</sup> Nuwoe-James, "The Mind of Christ," 293.

major participant in any discussion on violence, it has power to heighten violence or overcome it.

The study reveals that the church first responded to violence, supporting the notion that Jesus bequeathed to his followers a legacy of opposition to violence and warfare, a legacy of nonviolence. This was an unequivocal pacifism. The earliest Christians took this position very seriously and understood it as the way of Christ. Violence and the killing of Christians were viewed as a form of martyrdom, which was an honor to those who face it.

Later on, the church built a second position that was referred to as the just war theory. This position justified war as necessary for peace. It gave some steps to be taken before the waging of war, which was aimed at bringing peace. Most likely, this theory is the most accepted by Christians today. It reveals that the use of violence can be employed when the apparent lack of it will cause more evil, and that violence must be used with a just cause and limited end. In all, the study revealed seven stages to be employed before the use of violence. They include the following: Just cause, just intension, last resort, proper authority, limited ends, proportionality, and reasonable chance of success.

The theory of the holy war, or crusade, is the third and last in this category. This involves an acceptance of whatever kind of force or violence was necessary to secure a given end and the unquestioning participation of the Christian on the assumption that the fighting is service to God.

On the concept of violence in the African worldview, it stands out clearly as the total denunciation of God as the origin of evil and violence in the African worldview. God is viewed as good and not evil. This understanding underscores the African concept of evil and violence as caused by spirits of witchcraft and other bad spirits. Violence in Africa today is seen as the handiwork of Africans themselves due to their pre-existent conditions such as poverty, disease, corrupted leadership, and underdevelopment.

The section of the literature reviewed on the use of violence in Islam, reveals a connection for the use of violence in Islam with certain core teachings of the religion as imbedded in the Qur'an and the Hadith. While not all Muslims interpret those verses of the Qur'an and the sections of the Hadith with such gravity, those that are caught in the waves of such evil have shown enough commitment to the use and the "Books" of Islam as the reason for their actions. However, this suggests a need to take a close look into the use of scripture and the interpretations we give to it to avert tendencies of misuse and abuse.

A review of the section of the Nuwoe-James', "The Mind of Christ" on the proactive nonviolent response summarizes the focus of this present study. It is not enough to say that violence is evil and do nothing about it. However, for the Christian, he is to make the will and love of Jesus Christ his Lord and Savior to be his guiding principle. Christians must pursue peace and seek justice with all men.

Last, the study reveals that an overwhelming majority of Christians do not appear to subscribe to the path of violence, even those that justify its usage are mostly those who have argued for the theory of the Just War. The next chapter of this present

study hopes to present a view on the Christian's response to violence based on a biblical understanding.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PROJECT DESIGN

#### Introduction

A critical survey of the “Love Language Vision” will be conducted at this point. This chapter expects to present a biblical-theological position on responding to violence. This research method will be a major contribution to knowledge on the subject of the Christian response to violence. However, the Love Language Vision is not in itself completely new as it agrees with other proactive nonviolent methods recommended by others such as Nuwoe-James Kiamu “The Mind of Christ: A Paradigm Toward a Biblical Theology of Transformational and Proactive Response to Violence,” and R.L. Browning and R.A. Reed, *“Forgiveness, Reconciliation and Moral Courage: Motives and Designs for Ministry in a Troubled World.”* Toma A. Ragnjiya in his work, “Christian Faithfulness and the Common Good” as published in *Seeking Peace in Africa: Stories from African Peacemakers*, insists, “We cannot any longer afford to ignore or deny the violent areas of our traditions. Instead, we must approach them with humility and a willingness to transform them to peacemaking themes.” Toma goes further to quote Johnston and Sampson<sup>1</sup> who support this approach as it relates to the self-evaluation of the kind of language used in the “Sacred Books” of the religions in question. They state,

If religious communities are to realize their potential for peace-making, they will need to re-examine their primary language self-critically...to search their scriptural doctrinal foundations and their own histories to discover the

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<sup>1</sup> Douglas Johnson and Cynthia Sampson, *Religion: The Missing Dimension of Statecraft* (New York, NY: Oxford University, 1994), 309.



motivation, guidance, and resources for making peace. Religious communities will have to take a long, hard look at themselves and, when appropriate, admit that not everything said in their tradition points in the direction of peace, but actually some produces strife.... The challenge for religious people committed to making peace, then, is to disentangle the themes of conflict in their traditions from the themes of peace and to employ the latter, while disregarding or modifying the former.<sup>2</sup>

The love language vision is one approach that agrees with the statement forwarded by Johnston and Sampson. To get to the crux of the matter, what is love? Is love an irresponsible behavior in which one is expected to look aloof and do nothing about an evil coming through as an unleashing of violence on a people?

### **The “Love Language Vision”**

Mark Hopkins proposes a biblical view of responding to the crisis in Jos with the name “Love Language Vision.”<sup>3</sup> The Bible verse that inspired the proposal is John 8:31-47. It is a dialogue between Jesus and some Jews who believed in him. The issues that came out of the dialogue brought out a very important concept about the origin of violence and the relationship of that source of violence to those who practice it. The language we speak, which is called our mother tongue, shows our parentage. This biblical view asserts that by speaking the language of lies and murder, the Jews show clearly that the devil is their father; in contrast Jesus speaks his Father’s language of truth and love.

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<sup>2</sup> Toma A. Ragnjiya, “Christian Faithfulness and the Common Good,” in Donald E. Miller, Scott Holland, Lon Fendall, and Dean Johnson, eds., *Seeking Peace in Africa: Stories from African Peacemakers* (Geneva, IL: Cascadia, 2007), 161-162.

<sup>3</sup> Mark Hopkins is Associate Professor of Church History at the Theological College of Northern Nigeria Bukuru Nigeria. He has taught there for the last 20 years.

As already mentioned elsewhere in this study, the implications for speaking whatever kind of language not depending on any side of the divide, it shows your parentage; either God or Satan. The argument for speaking both languages is also strongly opposed by the teachings in the Bible. James 3:9-12 found this unnatural: a tree does not bear two kinds of fruit, nor does a spring produce fresh and salt water by turns, so how can we praise God and then curse men? By implication, we must trust God and speak his language of truth and love in all situations.

This view proposes that Christians on an individual level be engaged in speaking the love language of our Father, first among other Christians and then with Muslims in such a way as to transform our relationship with all men. This would bring love to its rightful place at the heart of the life of the churches of Christ worldwide, it would transform relationships between Christian and Muslim communities and it would lead Muslims into God's loving family through faith in Christ.<sup>4</sup>

The love language vision maintains a Bible-based position on responding to violence unleashed on a Christian community. One, Christians must walk with Jesus Christ on the way of the cross in this life, speaking the language of their Father: Love. This should be done in the grace that Christ gives to all who deny themselves and faithfully follow him. Two, justice must also be pursued in matters relating to violence unleashed on a people, the tools of justice put in place by the government must be used to insure justice and equity. The vision also proposes a teaching on the basics of Islam

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<sup>4</sup> Mark Hopkins, "Love Language Vision Materials" (Jos, Nigeria: New Life For All), unpublished work, 3.

and a session on healing the wounds of trauma as part of the whole package of its training.

### **The Vision Statement**

Starting in Jos, and spreading elsewhere in Northern Nigeria, Christians are engaging our Muslim neighbors in conversations in our Father's language of love, in such a way as to transform our relationships.

*Context:* From time to time, certain Muslims have been talking to us in their mother tongue, violence; we have been learning to reply in this language, arguing that it is the one they understand. But, most of the time we have stood well apart from them, folding our arms. Neither is Christ's way.

### **Aims**

1. To bring love to its rightful place at the heart of the life of the church.
2. To help Christians express that love to Muslims.
3. To transform relationships between the Christian and Muslim communities.
4. To lead Muslims into God's loving family through faith in Christ.

### **Method**

1. Mobilizing large numbers of Christians who can already speak love language (recruitment)
  - The scope is very broadly interdenominational.
  - Various interdenominational organizations are involved, with New Life For All in the lead.
  - The main focus is on ordinary members of local churches.

2. Help them improve their fluency and learn how to speak it with Christians and Muslims alike (training).
  - Training sessions are held for people from a number of churches together.
  - Resource persons and materials have been assembled for a 6 hour seminar on three topics – Sanctuary Session, Know Your Enemy and Know Your Friend – followed by an 18 hour training sequence on four topics – Love Language: Biblical Basis, Healing Trauma, Islam, and Love Language: practical application; a number of groups have already been trained in 4 states.
3. Those trained are to “speak” the love language with both Christians and Muslims in their ordinary daily lives (action).
  - Deepening relationships with the same people/families over an extended period.
  - Either based on existing relationships – neighbors, business/employment – or building new ones.
  - Friendliness and practical help prioritized over preaching.
  - Gospel sharing where opportunities arise.
  - Love Language speakers in each city to meet periodically for sharing, advice, encouragement and prayer.

## **Strategy**

The Love Language vision was adopted by New Life For All, a non-denominational fellowship of over thirteen denominations in Northern Nigeria committed to spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ in Nigeria and in other countries of the world. The NLFA has carried the gospel campaigns to countries like Cameroun, Chad, Niger, Ghana and Malawi. It has a large followership among all the thirteen denominations. The Love Language vision under the NLFA has successfully conducted trainings since its inception in the northern states of Kano, Kaduna, Nasarawa, Bornu, and Plateau. In Plateau State alone, over six training sessions have been conducted with a high success rate. A team of well-respected church leaders and seminary teachers were brought together to serve as facilitators on the training sessions of the program.

## **Understanding the Word Love**

Love is a concept that has been, and continues to be, one of the most potent forces within the religious traditions of humankind. It has been described as the most powerful force in the universe, binding all living things together. In the Christian tradition, God himself is defined as love (1 John 4:16). Love is a multi-dimensional phenomenon; it can be categorized under three broad understandings.<sup>5</sup> First, there is the erotic or sensual love. This type of love desires its object primarily for its own gratification and pleasure. Second, there is the brotherly or friendly love. This is the love that is offered in affection to another human being, without thought of personal gain.

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<sup>5</sup> Goring, *Dictionary of Belief*, 307.

Finally, in this general category is the divine love. This type of love is characterized by a self-giving, a bestowing of the divine upon the recipient, through grace.<sup>6</sup> In the Jewish and Christian traditions, this third type of love is key. It is understood as a covenant initiated by God himself. God binds himself in love to the people of Israel and desires that they should respond in love to him. This same concept gives a deeper understanding in Christianity. This covenant love reaches its fulfillment in the sending of Christ to die for the sins of the world (John 3:16). The sacrificial character (agape) of divine love is revealed in the willingness of Christ to lay down his life for us (John 15:13). It is understood along these lines that love for both God and man is fundamental to true religion, whether as expressed in the Old or New Testament. Jesus declared that all the law and the prophets hang upon love (Matthew 22:40; Mark 12:28-34). This understanding will guide the direction of this section on “Love Language” as a tool to be applied in dealing with issues of conflict and violence. Some aspects of this concept of love will be explored in some details to give a background to the proposal of the “Love Language Vision.”

### **God’s Love for Human Kind**

The use of love in this present study is rooted in the fact that love is an attribute of God and is his very essence. This concept runs through the Old and New Testament, and in the historical narrative of God’s encounter with his creatures. In the Old Testament, love is described as the basic character of the relationship between persons,

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<sup>6</sup> Goring, *Dictionary of Belief*, 307.

a relationship with the qualities of devotion, loyalty, intimate knowledge and responsibility. It is not simply an emotion, but it is the total quality of relationship. In its personal character, love is closely related to the sexual realm, even when the subject is God's love.<sup>7</sup> In all cases in the Old Testament, love is the force that both initiates and maintains relationships, be it among persons or between God and man. In the Old Testament, the idea of God is decisive for the New Testament ideas of love and is seen in grace, which includes the relationship of friendship, sex, covenant, loyalty, kindness, and sometimes mercy or pity.

However, love in the New Testament is expressed as the total essence and character of God. The word used for love in the New Testament is *agape*. Originally the word seems to have meant "satisfaction", "sympathy" or "a hospitable spirit." It stands in contrast with the other two words for love, *eros* which denotes sexual desire, passionate, aspiration, sensual longing. Despite the use of *eros* in philosophical discussion for "upward longing to the eternal and divine", the writers of the New Testament avoided the use of it.<sup>8</sup>

Three words describe briefly what this love (*agape*) is: it is patient, merciful and generous. This divine love is an active benevolence that will go to any length to do good to the beloved object and to secure its well-being. Jesus revealed the meaning of love by his life, and the church proclaimed that this was because he is the unique Son of the Father. Not only so, but Jesus seemed to have claimed this status. Therefore, in the

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<sup>7</sup> Good, "Love in Old Testament," 164.

<sup>8</sup> Good, "Love in Old Testament," 164.

gospels, he is recognized from heaven as the “beloved Son” (Mark 1:11; 9:7). This concept of the love of God in Christ also speaks of forgiveness (Mark 2:5). It also demands the utmost act of sacrifice for the sake of love. This was expressed in the life and ministry of Jesus.

However, love should not be seen to be helping and abetting evil and violence. It should be able to help the aggressor see the evil in the unleashing of violence on his targets. Love Language visions aim to achieve this through looking at the mind of Christ as expressed by Nuwoe-James Kiamu in his work.

### **The Content Of The Seminar**

The love language training is made of two distinct, but complementary, sessions. First, a six-hour seminar introduces the love language vision in detail. The seminar covers three different areas: the sanctuary session, know your enemy, and know your friend. Usually, this is expected to be very solemn. At the end of the seminar participants are given the opportunity to indicate their readiness to attend the training session which comes at later dates as will be planned. The details of the content will be presented here and an analysis of what each topic aims to achieve will be completed.

#### **Sanctuary Session**

The sanctuary session aims at setting the conflict situation and everything connected with it to one side to enter God’s presence and to spend time with him. It is expected that one will then see how that may change his/her perspective on the world



in which we live. The leader of the session invites those present to quietly enter the sanctuary using Psalm 73:1-28. The whole Psalm is read and all present are invited to a time of meditation with eyes closed and imagination engaged. It is expected that participants going through this meditation should be able to leave the crisis situation, anger, hurts, fears and personal plans behind. Leaving behind your goals, hopes and fears, things that you possess and those you desire; those you enjoy and those that cause pain. The sin that easily entangles you (Hebrew 12:1), just as no one is righteous enough to enter God's presence, so no one is too sinful; rather, all of us must confess and leave our sins to receive forgiveness in God's presence. We are all required to give all to God, including our lives. "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me" (Galatians 2:20). This part of the sanctuary session helps participants to trust God as they walk into his presence.

The second part of it is entering God's sanctuary, a place of light and warmth. Brightness, holiness, purity, righteousness, penetrating, revealing, opening you up, making you transparent, purifying and changing you (1 John 1:5). It is also a place of warmth, love that reaches inside to warm your heart, grace that receives you and renews you in Christ, fellowship that unites you to God, makes him your inheritance (1 John 4:8). This part of the session allows you to take all that God does to those who come to him for comfort and grace.

Finally, participants emerge from the sanctuary. They must remember that it is not they left before going into the sanctuary that they will carry on their way out. It gives us a time to love, and not hate, because God is love.

## Know Your Friend

This session aims at making participants become true friends of Jesus and to know how to behave as his friends in times of crisis and conflicts. It also has as its objectives the following:

- To understand and fulfill three New Testament conditions for friendship with Jesus as will be highlighted in the teachings.
- To understand that the way we live, not what we claim, indicates whom our father is.
- To understand that the agenda we set has to take into account the kingdom we belong to and the weapons that are appropriate to it.
- To learn to “speak” (live) God’s language of love with both Christians and Muslims.

In this session, Hopkins introduces the Narrowing Circle of Jesus’ friends in three stages. A choice between friends, Jesus’ friends: the wrong crowd and conditional friendship. First, while we live in a generation that believes it can combine friendship with Jesus with friendship with the world, this teaching calls for making a definite choice. When it comes to friendship, Christians have to choose between God and the world. He states strongly, that refusing to make a clear choice makes you lose God’s friendship (Hopkins n.d., 5).

Second, Jesus was written off as the “friend of tax collectors and sinners” (Luke 7:34). This is surprising and needs to be pondered. Jesus said, “I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance” (Luke 5:32). In our current church talk,

repentance is something people do when they first turn to Christ, and anything like real repentance can be more than a faint memory for those who have gone far in church. Yet, repentance is supposed to be a constant part of the Christian's life because we never leave sin completely behind. We need repentance all the time. A third narrowing in the circle is conditional friendship. Jesus said, "You are my friends, if you do what I commanded you" (John 15:14). Friendship with Jesus now has a condition, if you do what he says. While you accept the free gift of salvation in Christ, his friendship is based on doing what he says you should do. The summary of this teaching is that, Christians must reject friendship with the world, becoming repentant sinners and dropping all resistance to obedience to Jesus.

The section states that the devil has an agenda of murder and lies, which he aims to carry out through his agents (John 10:10). The agenda of the devil is carried out throughout the world. But our friend also has an agenda. This agenda is based on two truths: one, a very different kingdom and two, very different weapons. There is a huge gulf between the agenda of Satan and Jesus. This is a direct consequence of the gulf between their respective kingdoms. Second, the difference in the kingdoms in turn leads to a radical difference between the weapons used by Satan and the ones used by Jesus. Jesus went on to say, "If my kingdom were of this world, then my servants would be fighting (as Satan's servants do!), that I might not be delivered up to the Jews; but as it is, my kingdom is not of this realm" (John 18:36b, thus repeating his leading thought). Hopkins emphatically states that Islam is of this world and advances using spiritual weapons; the kingdom of Christ belongs to the world to come and advances using

spiritual weapons: “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses” (2 Corinthians 10: 3-4).

The agenda of Jesus is to be the priority of all his followers. They are to evangelize the church, turning “Christians,” including ministers, into friends of Jesus and for those friends of Jesus to reach out to their Muslim neighbors with the love of Christ. This session presses on all true followers of Christ to take the mind of Christ and be his friend “bearing fruit that will last.” Volf agrees with this presentation on the Christian faith when he states that a thin religious orientation leads to violence, but a thick religious orientation leads to piety. This thickness is in terms of depth not being zealous.

The more you are like Jesus, the more peaceful and tolerant you will be. The answer to religious violence is a realigning of our faith to Christ, becoming more like him daily. This is true especially in Christianity. Leaders of other world religions have also disassociated from their religions with violence perpetuated in the name of their religions as not the “true” religion. This is noted in the reaction of most Islamic leaders in America after the bombings in 9/11. This has been noted in this present study. To argue generally that religion is the cause of violence is not true, but that inadequate knowledge or “wrong” interpretations of religion is the cause of violence.

### Know Your Enemy

The enemy is Satan rather than people: “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this

darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 6:12). The session aims at revealing that Satan uses people to achieve his work. You can see and understand who Satan is using by their fruit. People who share his character as a murderer and a liar are known by their works. In this understanding, not all Muslims and not all Christians fall under this category. It does not matter what part of the divide you are, Muslims who have murdered Christians and Christians who have murdered innocent Muslims and fabricated letters purporting to reveal Muslim plans at times of crises are used by Satan to achieve his purposes.

In the case of Jos, the enemy has taken steps historically, and in practical ways, to ensure the establishment of Islam. Hopkins made a submission on the exploration of Muslims’ strategy on Jos before and since 2001 as follows:

- The Usman Dan Fodio jihad gives a background of domination in the name of Islam in the area under study – Middle Belt Nigeria.
- Political strategy leveraged domination via the Middle belt – the Far North is to rule the greater North by out numbering the Middle Belt and the greater North is to rule the country by outnumbering the South.
- Violence has come as a consequence of the failure of a political approach (that there are just 12 Shariah states out of the 36 states in Nigeria suggests that Muslims only constitute about a third of the nation).

While these historical submissions are true, the section’s main aim is to show that the “real” enemy is Satan who uses people as his agents of murder, lies and hatred. The concept of Satan is understood as a fallen angel held to be the personification and

instigator of evil. The term is derived from the Hebrew verb “Satan” which means “to oppose.” The Septuagint translation of “Satan” as “diabolic” gave rise to the term “devil.” Both terms are usually employed synonymously. Satan is the personification of the evil and negative qualities of humankind. He is understood as a tempter, deceiver and liar, as the cause of immoral feelings and actions, and as having the power of death and destruction over the bodies and souls of human beings. The concept is in the rich Judeo-Christian tradition and literatures. Many other religions have a similar concept of personified evil. Thus, in the Quran we find the concept of “Shaytan” and “Iblis.” These two concepts cover most of the meanings contained in the Judeo-Christian concept of Satan. A similar personification of evil is also to be found in Buddhism in the form of “Mara.” This being possesses many of Satan’s qualities but differs in not being a fallen angel.<sup>13</sup> The teaching expresses that this being is behind the violence we see in the world today. This does not however exempt human responsibility to be used by this being. The Bible teaches, “Resist the devil, and he will flee away from you, come to near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands you sinners and purify your hearts, you double-minded” (James 4: 7b-8). Man has the responsibility to resist the devil in his life. As Christians, this can only be achieved through the power of the Holy Spirit that resides in all those who have submitted to the saving knowledge of God in Christ.

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<sup>13</sup> Goring, *Dictionary of Belief*, 460-61.

## **The Content Of The Training Session**

The Love Language training should be conducted over an eighteen-hour session. This arrangement is flexible based on the availability and convenience of the participants. It may be conducted during a three-day period, or alternating days over three consecutive weeks. This training is the main session of the Love Language Vision seminar that covers the following areas of study: Love Language: Biblical Basis, Healing Trauma, Basic of Islam, Love Language: practical application and Justice. It is expected that at the end of the training, a participant will make a commitment in two supporting ways. One, they will be committed to speaking the language of their Father with their fellow Christians and with their Muslim brothers and sisters. Two, they will be committed to be part of an accountability group that will be meeting once a month to pray together, give feedback, and support each other on the need to continue to speak the Love Language. An analysis of the content of each teaching will be conducted while the full teaching will be added at the end of this study as an appendix.

### **Love Language: Biblical Basis**

#### **Genuine Christianity 1**

This is the first session of the teaching in the Love Language Vision training. Mark Hopkins writes that the aim of the session is, “To make sure Christians are all truly disciples of Jesus Christ” (Hopkins n.d., 2). The objectives are to understand Jesus’

teaching on the way of the cross and to abandon any kind of Christianity that bypasses the way of the cross.

Hopkins's presentation on this subject is one of the most radical Bible-based approaches to understanding the life in Christ. Hopkins point out very early in the presentation that our understanding of Christianity is central to living out a life in Christ. John 8 dealt with people who "believed" in him, yet refused to change their thinking living diametrically opposed to the ways Jesus lived.<sup>14</sup> He points out that as many Jewish contemporaries of Christ who failed to understand the ways of Jesus, many Christians today, supposedly the people of God, were actually something else.

The text that inspired this section of the teaching is Luke 9: 18-27. A study of the text, according to Hopkins, brings out some crucial teachings of Jesus on the way of the cross. Genuine Christianity is walking with Jesus on the way of the cross. In the text, three things happened in quick succession: the first recognition that Jesus is the Christ; the first teaching of Jesus' death and resurrection; and the first teaching of his followers' death and resurrection.

The teaching points out two very important issues. One, Jesus' way of the cross is a way of death and sacrifice for the redemption of many. While the Jewish worldview was that the Messiah would be a powerful conqueror, Jesus insisted on the Messiah's suffering, death and resurrection. This is key to understanding genuine Christianity. Christian who fails to understand this teaching possess a poor grasp of the gospel.

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<sup>14</sup> Mark Hopkins, "Genuine Christianity: Teaching on Love Language," unpublished work, 4.



The second point in this teaching is “our way of the cross.” We may have accepted Jesus’ way of the cross, but it is also important to understand our way of the cross. Hopkins points out that Jesus firmly attached the future of the Messiah to the future of the Messiah’s followers. The two futures are remarkable similar with stories of suffering, death, and resurrection. Verse 23 is the heart of Hopkins presentation on this issue. The cross is not to be visited once at conversion, but must lie at the heart of our daily living with no other way of being a Christian. If you do not carry your cross, you cannot be a disciple. Following Jesus means going after him, following the same way he followed – the way of the cross.

This section of the teaching ends by stating that a radical rejection of all suffering, or taking up the position that it is better to inflict suffering on others than to bear it ourselves, is one sign that Christians have abandoned the way of the cross. The growing militancy of Christians in our time reveals our increasing investment on earth. The more treasure you have stored up on earth, the more you will do to protect your investment (Matthew 6:19-21).

## **Genuine Christianity 2**

The second section of the Love Language teaching has as its aim to learn to base our thinking concerning both salvation and our daily lives on the way of the cross. Its objectives are to understand Paul’s basic thinking about salvation and to compare it with our own in order to correct our thinking.

The content of the teaching distinguishes between the general average understandings of the concept of salvation in contrast to that of Paul. The first is a scenario of repentance and belief in Jesus by faith that leads to salvation. In that moment, salvation is complete. This understanding, according to Hopkins, gives a clear theological distinction between justification and sanctification- with only the former as part of the core doctrine of salvation. He states that this understanding lands us in a difficult place with the Christian life caught in an unending cycle of sin and repentance, up and down. It has made the life much more relaxed than the Catholic or Muslim who believes that God is keeping accounts of all the good and bad that you do, ready to bring them out on judgment day. This leads to legalistic preaching among pastors in order to have control over their members.

Paul's theology of salvation is taken from Romans 5:20- 6:1-14. This is one of the most radical teachings on Christian living. Paul's understanding is summarized in the statements that, "Christians cannot live in sin because s/he is a new person." The argument is in line with the teaching of Jesus on the way of the cross. Hopkins argues that with our sins transferred, or even paid for, by the death of Jesus is a weak way of expressing the experience according to Paul. He argues, "Let's follow what Paul is saying in Romans 6. Christians cannot live in sin (verse 2): Why? Because Christ's cross is also ours, verse 6-7. Our sinful self died there, and we rise with Christ to a new righteous life. Living a perpetual life of sin shows that one has never truly gone through death and resurrection with Christ."<sup>15</sup> Christians connect to the death of Jesus by sharing in it

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<sup>15</sup> Mark Hopkins, "Love Language Teaching – Genuine Christianity 2," unpublished work, 5.

through baptism initially, and continually through Holy Communion. This teaching states emphatically, that for Paul, the way of the cross is the way of salvation, as we first believe in Christ and as we walk with him day by day. That is why Paul is happy to talk about the ongoing process of being saved (1 Corinthians 1:18, 2 Corinthians 2:15). This teaching offers a radical understanding of who we are in Christ and how we are to live in him. Unlike the cross, people find the presence of resurrection very attractive, looking for this resurrected life in wrong ways, largely as a physical and material foretaste of salvation. Thus, we see the outright rejection of any kind of discomfort even for the sake of Christ and an absolute priority given to skin-saving in crisis. Hopkins argues in this presentation that our first installment of resurrection is pre-eminently spiritual – outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day (2 Corinthians 4:16).<sup>16</sup>

The two teachings of the Love Language seminar have tried to bring central issues of “Genuine Christianity” as the basis for this vision. Our understanding and application of scripture is central to our practice of faith. If Christians have a poor grasp of the message of the gospel, it will reflect in their daily life. The Love Language Vision, through this teaching, calls for a turnaround in how Christians react to violence by following the teachings and life of Christ.

## Healing Trauma

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<sup>16</sup> Hopkins, “Love Language Teaching,” 5.

The Love Language Vision recognizes that all people affected by violence pass through some kind of trauma. The word “trauma” is from the Greek meaning “wound.” It is a physical injury or wound to the body or an extremely distressing experience that causes severe emotional shock and may have long-lasting psychological effects. It is thought that if people will listen to the Love Language teachings, and move from hatred to love in their daily Christian life, they should experience healing of physical, emotional, and psychological wounds. The material used for the teaching on trauma healing is “Healing the Wounds of Trauma: How the Church Can Help,” originally by Harriet Hill and Margaret Hill prepared for the American Bible Society. The Love Language Vision has received written permission from the authors for the use of this material in her trainings.

The material on Trauma healing covers the following areas:

1. If God loves us, why do we suffer?
2. How can the wounds of our hearts be healed?
3. What happens when someone is grieving?
4. Helping women who have been raped?
5. How can the church minister in the midst of HIV and AIDS?
6. Care for the caregiver.
7. Taking your pains to the cross.
8. How can we forgive others?
9. How can we live as Christians in the midst of conflict?
10. Looking ahead.

An assessment of the topics covered in the trauma healing session is targeted towards meeting the needs of victims of violence. It is arranged carefully to bring an understanding of the situation as well as to experience healing through the process. The Love Language Vision recognizes the amount of trauma and pain that victims of crisis go through, and for any meaningful handling of conflict itself, victims must experience not only the healing of physical wounds but heart wounds as well.

### Basics Of Islam

This section of the training covers the history of Islam and some aspects of the literature and theology of Islam. Historically, the encounter of Islam and Christianity in Jos is profound. I have mentioned elsewhere that the line of latitude seven hundred miles north of the equator is a geographical front line where Christianity and Islam collide. More than half of the world's 1.3 billion Muslims live along the tenth parallel; so do 60 percent of the world's 2 billion Christians. Here, in the buzzing megacities and swarming jungles of Africa and Asia, the two religions meet; their encounter is shaping the future of each faith and of entire societies as well.<sup>20</sup> Jos falls on this geographical front line. The need for a basic, but comprehensive, understanding of Islam by Christians in this case cannot be over emphasized. Islam should not just be tolerated, but accepted, as a reality. It should not just be understood as a "mission field," but as a people to be respected, while we seek genuine understanding of each other's faith. Christianity and Islam are both missionary faiths and need every understanding and respect for

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<sup>20</sup> Eliza Griswold, *Dispatches from the Fault Line Between Christianity and Islam: The Tenth Parallel* (New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2010).

evangelism as well as Islamic Dawah be conducted. This section highlights the historical aspects of Islam to give a general background to what Islam is, and second, a discussion of the literature and theology of Islam. The aim is to provide a survey of what they believe, and to some extent, how are their actions shaped by what they believe. Islamic scholars have submitted that the pre-Islam period was categorized by *Jahilliyah* (Ignorance), but the coming of Islam brings *Iman* (Knowledge of Belief).

This section on the history of Islam looks into the following aspects of Islamic history:

1. Pre-Islamic Arabia
2. The life of the Prophet Muhammad: the Meccan period
3. The life of the Prophet Muhammad: the Medinan period
4. The birth of the Islamic community

This brief introduction of Islam narrates the geographical land of Islam as the Arabian Peninsula, an area with a rich history of politics and traditional pre-Islam religion. The area has housed important kingdoms before the Islamic era began. These kingdoms include the following: the kingdom of Saba – 800BC; the kingdom of Ma'in – 700BC; the Himyarite kingdom – 115 BC. Historically, these are kingdoms that show a rich past around the Arabian Peninsula. Others existed as contemporaries with the rise of Islam and this category include: the Ghassan Kingdom at the northwest of Arabia – 529AD; the Lakhimid kingdom northeastern border of Arabia – 275AD; and the Kinda Kingdom central Arabia – 480AD. It is important to note that none of these kingdoms, ancient or contemporaries with Islam, were able to bring the whole region under a

unified central authority. Arabia was also known as an idolatrous and polytheistic place. The people believed in evil spirits and supernatural forces residing in stones, trees and in places. Belief in magic was widespread. The Arabians worshipped four main gods out of the 360 gods they had. Hubal – the male deity; al-Lat – sun god; al-Manat – the goddess of fate; and al-Uzza – the morning star. The supreme deity was Allah – who had no visible representation. Mecca, the birthplace of Muhammad, was the religious center of Arabia, housing the Ka'aba, a square building which had a black meteorite stone set in its side. It was also a place of pilgrimage for all clans to visit once a year for worship. The area had some Jewish and Christian influences.

Islam cannot be understood without considering the role of the prophet Muhammad. He is important both for the inception of Islam as a major world religion and for the shaping of Islamic theology. Born in 570AD, in Mecca, to Abdallah and Amina, his father died before he was born and his mother died when he was six. He grew up with his grandfather and uncle under some challenging circumstances. He married a wealthy widow – Khadijah in 595AD, and he received a call to prophethood in 610AD. This information is important to establish that Islam is a religion with a long history believed to be reality by many people.

In September 622AD, Muhammad made his Hijrah (flight) to Medina. This event is important to the further development of Islam. This journey was a monumental turning point in the development of Islam. The institution of the Islamic Ummah (community) occur at this time, bringing the unification of not just the tribes of Medina, but of the entire Islam community. A series of battles ensured the establishment of the

community. At the demise of the Prophet in 632AD, the community was led by four different men designated as the “Khalifah” – Caliph (leading in place of Muhammad). The Islamic community under the four men namely, Abu Bakr, Umar Ibn al-Kattab, Uthman Ibn Affan, and Ali Ibn Abu Talib, enjoyed a great expansion beyond the Arabian Peninsula to other parts of the world.

The second section on the basics of Islam, addresses the literature and theology of Islam. The Quran is the foundation of Islam. No adequate knowledge of Islam is possible without a basic understanding of the Qur’an. Although belief in all divine scripture is a major Islamic doctrine, for Muslims the Qur’an holds such an incomparable place among other revealed scriptures that it demands separate treatment. The Qur’an is expected to be a guide to all committed Muslims; the totality of life is modeled after the Qur’an and the Hadith.

The second literature that is expected to guide the life of Muslims is the Hadith. The Hadith (Arabic - pl. Ahadith) means news or information. It has a special meaning for Islam. This refers to the sayings and doings of Prophet Muhammad and the actions he approved of during his lifetime. Those actions, sayings, and the actions of others whom the prophet approved are expected to compliment and answer the questions that the Qur’an is not able to answer. As Muslim lawyers and scholars began to find the Qur’an inadequate to help with new problems, they began searching for actual sayings and practices (Sunnah) of the prophet of Islam to help them. Muslims regard their Prophet Muhammad as a perfect example concerning all areas of lifestyle. Therefore,



Muslims tried to recall how Muhammad lived and what he said, and then live accordingly.

Understanding the place of the books of Islam and how it guides and directs the daily affairs of Muslims is significant. The daily routine of prayers (salat) five times daily, recitation of the creed (shahadah), fasting in the month of Ramadan – ninth month of the Islamic calendar (sawm), giving of alms to charity, giving of tithes (zakat), and pilgrimage to Mecca (Hajj) are ways in which Muslims seek to obey Allah. Religion is seen as a complete way of life, guiding all aspects of life including government. This is achieved through the Shariah – Islamic legal code. This understanding is necessary for any practical issues of mutual relations between Muslims and others.

#### Love Language: Practical

Evangelist Daniel Zagi has been involved in a practical situation of building mutual relations with Muslims, earlier in Bauchi State, Northeast Nigeria, and now in Jos and many other parts of northern Nigeria. Daniel Zagi, once a Muslim before becoming a Christian, understands that the best way Christians can reach out to Muslims is not necessarily by proclaiming the Word, but by living the Word. In this section, he reveals a valuable lesson of “Love Language” in practical terms.

Zagi presents his basis for our love for Muslims in the following scriptural texts: John 3:16, “For God so loves the world that he gave his only begotten Son, whoever believes in him shall have everlasting life”. God loves all people and as the children of God, he calls us to love as he does; 1 Timothy 2:4 expresses God’s desires that all men

be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth in Christ. Zagi sees this text as a basis for our expression of love by Christians to Muslims and peoples of other faith persuasions, more generally. Zagi expresses practical narrations of stories of his life and experiences living with Muslims in Bauchi State and the positive outcome of transformational relationships with people around him (Zagi n.d., 5).

The practical steps suggested by Zagi in carrying the love language vision include, friendship and living the Christian life in practical terms with our Muslim neighbors. He narrates two stories to buttress these two concepts.

A Christian woman lives in a big compound housing twenty-five families. She was the only Christian family while the others were Muslims. After a session on loving the Jesus way in the church, Maman Esther (Esther's mother), goes back home and decides to put into action what she has heard in the church. The normal act of everyone cleaning just the frontage of his room and not sharing with any one was what she decides to change. Maman Esther will wake up very early and sweeps the whole compound and decides to share with the other women what she has, this change in her attitude makes all the difference. The other women wanted to know what had happened to Maman Esther, and she shared what she was taught in the church: the transforming power of God in Christ. The women wanted her to tell them more on this "new teaching," giving her an opportunity to share the gospel with them.

Daniel Zagi also lived in a Muslim dominated area in Bauchi State, Nigeria. His neighbors knew he was a Christian, but his cheerfulness and warm heartedness to all that came his way, gave him the opportunity to share the gospel with his Muslim

neighbors. They thought Zagi's Christianity was different from others. Saying a word of greeting could open an opportunity for ministry in that context. It is expected that those trained are to "speak" the love language with both Christians and Muslims in their ordinary daily lives in practical ways. When this is achieved, it will deepen relationships with the same people/families over an extended period, either based on existing relationships – neighbors, business/employment – or building new ones. Friendship and practical help are prioritized over preaching, sharing the Gospel only when opportunities arise.

### Justice

The crucial issue that theologians and ethicists in Nigeria have identified as the greatest challenge in the face of incessant violence is how to get people to believe that justice is possible, in spite of its apparent lack. This is central to our effort to talk people into speaking the love language in this context. Christians in Jos, and elsewhere, should ensure justice prevails with the comprehensive understanding of God's justice and love. The pursuit of dialogue is one way to ensure justice, peace and love, talking to the "other" because we believe in justice and we want the "other" to know that we care about justice, peace and love.

Agang expresses why Nigerians in general believe that justice eludes us as a nation, thereby resulting to taking the law into our hands (Agang n.d., 3). Most Nigerians believe that justice is theoretical. Therefore, in times of violence, they take the law into their own hands. Violence provides a free zone for all sorts of crimes. Peace and stability

can be a reality when justice is visible in all areas of life. Second, the Nigerian context shows that corruption has eaten deep into all walks of life. Thus, the Nigerian people have lost confidence in the security agencies – the police, military and even the justice systems. This context adds to the incessant growth of violence that seems to defile all actions to avert it.

Third, Agang states the inconsistency in thinking about the question of justice (Agang n.d., 4). This is that most Christians' understanding of the cycle of moral obligation is parochial. They want justice done to those outside their "cycle of moral obligation," but are not equally willing to let justice take its course on those within their "cycle of moral obligation" who erred on the side of justice. This is important to our understanding of the issues in Jos. Christians must go before the law with clean hands, not just for the sake of right, but for a lasting impact on those on the other side.

A fourth dimension, as presented in this teaching on justice, is the disturbing issue of theological question. Church members are no longer willing to listen to the scripture on the message of turning the other cheek or loving our enemies. In other words, as they have lost confidence in the police, military and the justice system, they have equally and indirectly lost faith in the ability of God to salvage them from the current situation. Based on the assessment of conflicts, some theologians and leaders of the church have interpreted and referred to the conflict as religious violence, not just political or economic violence. This category of Christian leaders advocates allowing members to acquire guns to protect themselves from the enemy, and in extreme cases,

even go all out to attack the perceived enemy. Such leaders have lost complete faith in the justice system in Nigeria, thereby living in this fatal way.

In his teaching, Agang introduces a strong biblical basis for justice and the pursuit of it as Christians in our communities (Agang n.d., 4). In view of the difficulty often encountered in the face of injustice, it is essential that Christians pay careful attention to the following crucial issues in discussing justice: the author of justice, human agents of justice, foundations of justice, types of justice, focus of justice, and how to pursue justice nonviolently when there is an apparent absence of justice.

In this teaching, Agang stresses that God is the author of justice, it is one of his attributes and it is his essence and nature (Agang n.d., 5). In a context where the general social experience of justice is absent, the good news is that God is righteous in himself and in all he does. Justice is the moral character and virtue of God, the righteousness of the divine nature exercised in his moral government. When we experience an apparent lack of justice, it does not mean that human beings do not have a clue as to what justice is. It means they have chosen to ignore their God-given moral agency. Human beings in all societies have this God-given moral responsibility to call on human agents of justice to put it to active use in all aspects of life.

### **Conclusion**

The Love Language Vision proposes a well-balanced, all-inclusive, proactive approach to responding to the issues of violence in our communities. First, this is an approach that is Bible-centered. It brings to bear our understanding of who we are in

Christ. It is Christ-centered, the life and mind of Christ become the basis for this response. It does not only intend to keep the victim of violence comforted and to bear his pains, but also to eventually win the aggressor back to the loving arms of Jesus Christ. This view is expressed first in the section of the training on the sanctuary session; know your friend, and the section on genuine Christianity. These sections form the foundation upon which the love language vision is built. It reflects the place of Scripture in the Christian life.

The words of Jesus in Matthew 5: 43- 46 express the radical nature of this calling to all who will follow Jesus: “You have heard that it was said, you should love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you” (5: 43-44). We respond with love to those who love us, but to love our enemies is a difficult thing to do. The price is high, and the risk is great. The enemy is such a threat. But Jesus commands that you should pray for him – because he is someone whom God loves. Edwin Robertson writing on the legacy of Bonhoeffer, states this on sharing in God’s suffering, “Man is summoned to share in God’s suffering at the hands of a godless world. Once we have torn ourselves away from fear of heresy in thinking of God who suffers, we are able to see the agony of God in a world that inflicts inhuman cruelty upon people. God’s sorrow is not that the world is irreligious, but that it is inhuman.”<sup>23</sup>

It calls for a radical response to the inhumanity of the world from a deep understanding of God in Christ. This is the heart of the love language teaching. The cross

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<sup>23</sup> Edwin Roberson, *Bonhoeffer’s Legacy* (New York, NY: Macmillan), 60.

is not to be visited once at conversion, but must lie at the heart of our daily living.

Radical rejection of all suffering, and even taking up the position that it is better to inflict suffering on others than to bear it ourselves, is one sign that Christians have abandoned the way of the cross.

The understanding that radical Islam is just one of the faces of Islam reveals a great hope for peaceful co-existence between Muslims and peoples of other faith persuasions. However, it is important to draw the attention of Islamic Scholars to the actions of terrorist organizations that have roots in Islam as rooted in their understanding and interpretation of some Qur'anic verses and the Hadith. This calls for a sincere response from all scholars of good will from within Islam. A personal reflective scholarship on those verses of the Qur'an will give another perspective that will eventually reduce or even eradicate those terrorist tendencies within the tradition that we see today. This is necessary because this study has earlier revealed that the use of Qur'anic quotations have tied the actions of such people with the verses they quote before any action is taken in that regard.

On justice, Martin Luther King Jr. states convincingly, "The moral arc of the universe is long, but it bends toward justice."<sup>24</sup> The need for justice, however delayed, must be seen to come to its right place in its time. King also said, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere".<sup>25</sup> This calls for a united effort among peoples of all faith persuasions, Muslims and Christians alike in Jos and elsewhere to reject evil and

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<sup>24</sup> Carl Herman, in Global Research, "U.S. Government Agencies" found guilty in Martin Luther King's assassination, published on internet January 22, 2013.

<sup>25</sup> Herman, "U.S. Government Agencies."

violence unleashed on a people without prejudice to a “a cycle of moral obligation.” Rick Warren once said, “The achievement of peace and understanding among religious divides has to start from the hand, heart and head.” This means that our actions are the starting point, then our hearts can begin to have empathy with others, and last, to the head where we experience a deeper understanding of one another. The truth is that when violence and murder is done in the name of God, it raises a question of which god? Killings have been done by some Christians claiming the name of God, while some Muslims will also shout “Allah hu akbar – God is great,” then kill someone. These murderers may be worshipping the same god who is not the True God.

Finally, the love language training provides an all-inclusive approach to the question of violence in our communities. Christians are called by God to walk the way of the cross; this is exemplified in the life of the Lord of the church – Jesus Christ. Using the arms of justice put in place by governments is something that Christians must put to use. This will raise the conscience of the society on right and wrong, good and evil.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### OUTCOMES

#### **Introduction**

This work desired to achieve three objectives from the onset:

1. To trace historical issues in the crises in Jos, Central Nigeria;
2. To historically trace how the church has handled issues of violence through the years;
3. To provide biblically sound and theologically healthy responses to violence in contemporary Christian experience.

#### **Implications for the Changing Patterns of the Conflict**

Every cause of action has accompanying implications. The emerging changing patterns of the conflicts in Jos have raised many questions for, and implications of, the gospel and the perception of many on Christianity and how is it practice today in the area. In the 2001 conflict and those that happened before then, most Christians tried to respond in the way they understood Jesus had taught them. This way was via non-violence. Church leaders in Jos and its environs had to address members of their congregation on responding with the Jesus model. Teachings on, "Turning the other cheek," as taught by Jesus Christ in the gospels, dominated the pulpits Sunday after Sunday. This initial reaction to the conflict by the Christians came out of their knowledge of what they knew was taught in the scriptures, and what was echoed by their leaders.

But the negative experience of Christians continued with many lost human lives and properties. Many places of worship were burned, and in some cases, business areas were looted. This resulted in the development of hatred for the Muslims among the Christian communities. Ndirmbita captures the sad picture of the conflict in Jos, saying, "Muslims would hack down any indigene or Christian at sight while the indigenes and Christians, armed with sticks, will club to death any Muslim that they could overpower."<sup>1</sup> The implication for this shift in response to violence on the side of the Christians is sad; this has made even Christians killers. As a result, the message and the image of the gospel are at stake.

Second, is the implication of the compartmentalization of communities as practice on the Jos Plateau. Having whole Muslim communities staying on their own grounds with Christians maintaining their areas as well. This compartmentalization of communities would eventually lead to the demonization of groups and the breeding hatred, suspicion and animosity. This type of demonization of a group of people has been witnessed in past conflicts in other parts of the world. The Rwandan genocide remains fresh in our minds today, as always, as a sad reality of events in our generation. Sunday Dare puts it this way, "I am no prophet of doom, but I have seen enough and know enough to say boldly that if the government at both the state and national levels fail to act decisively from time hence, the road to Kigali (Rwanda) stares us in the face."<sup>2</sup> Many innocent people have been killed, not because of any evil action on their side, but

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<sup>1</sup> S. Offi and Major Adeyi, "Bloodbath on the Plateau," in Ndirmbita, "Inter-Religious Conflicts and Their Implications for Christian Mission," (masters thesis, TCNN, April 2005), 85.

<sup>2</sup> Ndirmbita, "Inter-Religious Conflicts," 44.

because they only belong to the other side of the divide. The divide also has to do with what you wear, and what language you speak. This cultural aspect of the people is brought into the conflict to simply identify who to kill or spare, pending on where he/she is at the time of the crisis. A man wearing the “Baban riga” – a big gown mostly used by the Hausa/Fulani Muslims is killed instantly by non-Muslims, while a man wearing a shirt over a jeans trouser is killed by Muslims because he is perceived to be a non-Muslim. This continued separation of quarters by the adherents of the two religions will only lead to more days of unleashing violence on each other. The compartmentalization of communities on the Jos Plateau disagrees with the natural law of harmonious co-existence as established by the Creator of the heavens and the earth.

Rev. Dr. Gyang Pam captures it this way,

All of us live in one abode or one world no matter who you are you cannot go and live in another planet other than this earth. The reason why we are all here is for us to live in harmony with each other. We don't have an option but we are compelling by this fact that the earth we are living in nobody can claim sole ownership of it. And that we all depend on each other. Nobody or group of people can be self sufficient as long as we live on this earth. Everybody is very important. We are then living in symbiotic relationship. If everybody is like you or having the same faith then the world will be a very dull place.<sup>3</sup>

The separation of residences among Muslims and Christians in Jos is further encouraged by the other emerging change in the crisis. This is the total destruction of houses in burned areas. The implication of this attitude is that communities are not allowed to come back to their homes even after tensions relapse. If a house is burned, it can be re-roofed, but if a house is completely destroyed to its foundations, it will be difficult for the owner to re-build it again. The implications of this are longstanding.

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<sup>3</sup> Gyang Pam, “Harmonious Co-Existence,” *Light Bearer* (November 2010): back page.

Victims of this conflict will relay these stories to their children, which will create a transfer of hatred from one generation to the next. These incessant conflicts in Jos has also brought about a chain of hatred from one generation to the next that needs to be broken. Christians see the destruction carried out by Muslims as an evil that needs to be averted. Ndirmbita captures the laments of Rev. Prof. Pandang Yamsat as echoed at the Plateau Peace Conference. Yamsat complained bitterly of a sense of betrayal that, "Those who have been made well by church hospitals, educated by church schools, empowered economically by the rural development programs and personnel of the church on the Plateau are the ones rewarding us with evil."<sup>4</sup>

Earlier, it was mentioned that the emerging practices of cannibalism and fetishism growing among "Christians" in Jos could imply that, first, "Satan is more powerful than God, or that one could follow God in ordinary life, but when things get difficult following God is not adequate, one needs to bring other unbiblical way to practice."<sup>5</sup> The second implication is that one's actions contradict the teachings of Jesus in John 8. If one speaks the language of violence, it shows his parentage: the devil. If one speaks the language of love, it also shows his parentage: God.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Pandang Yamsat, "Toward Achieving a Lasting Peace on the Plateau" Plateau Peace Summit, Conference Hall, Governor's office Rayfield, Jos, August 2002, in Ndirmbita, "Inter-Religious Conflicts," 82.

<sup>5</sup> Mark Hopkins, "Notes on 'Love Language Vision,'" *A Program of New Life For All* (Jos, 2009), unpublished work.

<sup>6</sup> Hopkins, "Notes."

**In the Course of This Present Study, the Researcher Discovered the Following**

1. The violence in Jos is rooted in historical perceptions of early and later encounters between the Hausa/Fulani communities and the indigenous communities in the area.
2. While the crises have an ethnic face, it is also rooted in religious ideologies that serves as a conveying vehicle of the violence witnessed in Jos, and in Central and Northern Nigeria as a whole.
3. That violence is placing the church in a struggle for survival. Being followers of Jesus Christ and shunning violence does not insulate one against it. Therefore, the need exists for the church to respond in such a way that its response can overcome violence (evil).
4. It is possible, and necessary, to unlearn the habit of violence and replace it with that of proactive nonviolence in order for the Church to remain the salt and light of the world. This task will require a concerted effort and hard work, but it will be far more productive for the ministry of the Church.
5. The Love Language Vision (LLV) provides a balanced biblical and theological all-inclusive approach to addressing the issues of violence in Jos, and elsewhere.
6. The Love Language Vision has shown that Christians can absorb violence and transform it into creative possibilities for the glory of God and the redemption of violent humanity. There is no room for passivity in this case.
7. If the Church will make headways in overcoming violence, it must remain on the proactive edge against violence at different levels. Many churches do not have

any seriously thought through responses to violence and often fall to the impulsive drag to use violence when violence comes against them.

8. The study has also established that the Church and Christianity, not the state, possess the key to overcoming violence and should, therefore, begin to work in this direction. This is because, in Christ, it has the ability and capacity to love even those who persecute the Church.

### **Conclusion**

This study has illustrated that the Gospel has the power to transform all human beings who have given their lives to Jesus Christ. The transforming experience results in bringing the Kingdom of God here on earth.

This can be achieved through a proactive non-violent response in love even to the aggressor. Anger and a desire for revenge is a human natural tendency as a universal phenomenon that is irresistible. However, a life in Christ transformed by the love and grace of God must not and should not be guided by human universal tendencies. The search for peace is only possible through active non-violence because violence can never bring peace. Violence only begets violence, whereas active non-violence begets love, forgiveness, reconciliation, justice, and peace. May the ever-amazing grace of God energize his church to speak only the language of its Lord: Love.

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